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commonweal

the church in the year 2000

commonweal papers: 4

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Will You Help Create A Foreign Policy For Our Children?

On May 11, last year, our son, Mike, an Army lieutenant, was killed in Vietnam. Since then, many thousands more have been slaughtered, both Americans and Vietnamese. And to what purpose?

It is our sincere opinion that the present course of our government—directed by Mr. Nixon—is a tragic and mistaken one that can only lead to the deaths of far more young men, the loss of self-respect of millions upon millions of our citizens and the imminent collapse of our society.

We believe the time to demand a voice in our destiny—the future of America—is **now.**

Last Wednesday, college students and faculty by the hundreds of thousands joined the Vietnam Moratorium to plead for the immediate return of our troops. The impact of their action was clear, and it was felt.

As members of Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam, we believe members of the religious community should join hands with these students and teachers in their efforts to create a foreign policy for our children. We want persons from churches and synogogues from throughout the nation to be with us in Washington on Nov. 13, 14 and 15, for a MARCH AGAINST DEATH. On Nov. 15, there will be a massive march and rally immediately following The March Against Death. The 13th and 14th coincide with the second Vietnam Moratorium, and we are certain that several hundred thousand of our fellow citizens will want to be a part of that assembly, the largest **demonstration for peace** in the history of this nation.

We ask members of the religious community to put aside business as usual and make every effort to come to Washington. Camus' dictum that we cannot love our country and still love justice must be reversed!

To the wives, parents and relatives of the young men killed in Vietnam, who are also opposed to the Johnson-Nixon war policies, we make a special plea: Join us in Washington.

Sincerely,

Robert & Louise Ransom

Robert and Louise Ransom

Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam
Rev. Richard R. Fernandez, Director
475 Riverside Drive
New York, New York 10027
(212) 749-8518

☐ I want to help Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam mobilize people in Washington as well as create other action projects so long as the war continues. I am enclosing the following amount:
☐ $250 ☐ $150 ☐ $25 ☐ $10

☐ I am a next-of-kin. Please send information regarding special arrangements being made for persons such as myself.

☐ I am interested in participating in the MARCH AGAINST DEATH and rally, November 13, 14 and 15 in Washington. Send information.

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Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam is part of a massive coalition of religious, fraternal, labor, welfare, civil rights and peace groups working together under the umbrella of the New Mobilization Committee to End The War.

MARCH AGAINST DEATH

The will of the people must be felt by The Administration and members of the government at all levels. Join your fellow citizens in Washington Nov. 13, 14 and 15. The MARCH AGAINST DEATH will begin at Arlington National Cemetery at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, the 13th, and move single file past the White House and to the Capitol. Each marcher will carry the name of a dead G.I. or of a city or town that has been bombed. These cards will be placed in a coffin at the Capitol. After the march ends early on Saturday morning, the 15th, the coffin bearing the cards will be taken to the White House.

SCHEDULE for NOVEMBER 15	Assemble at 9:00 a.m. at mall area west of 3rd St. N.W. March begins at 11:00 a.m. and the Rally is at 2:00 p.m. at The Ellipse.

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THE CHURCH IN THE YEAR 2000

Imagine that the church, in 1769, had attempted to foresee its situation in the year 1800. Those three decades witnessed the development of steam power, the French and American revolutions, the shattering of ancient states by new ideologies and new military methods. Would the church have been caught less unprepared by the vast economic, social and political transformations these events signalled? Or imagine the church, a century later, in 1869, looking forward to the year 1900. It might have recognized the fundamental shift in European power from France to Germany, or predicted the rise of socialism and working-class consciousness which would so concern it at the end of the century, or considered the consequences of growing imperialism, colonialism and the spread of Western culture.

Of course, the chances are that the church would have registered few of the major developments that transformed its situation in the last three decades of both those centuries. In 1769 Catholic churchmen would have given great weight to the threatened dissolution of the Jesuits and little thought to the spinning jenny or Arkwright's water frame, invented that year. In 1869, Catholic leaders were wrapped up in the infallibility debate and the future of papal temporal power. The significance of the 14th Amendment to the American Constitution, passed the year before; or the opening of the Suez Canal (a few weeks before the opening of Vatican I); or the establishment of the Knights of Labor; or, for that matter, the first electric washing-machine (as well as the publication of John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women*) in 1869 did not loom large in their minds.

These reveries illustrate both the need and the risk involved in *Commonweal Papers: 4*. These Papers have always been an experiment: an attempt

(Editorial continued on page 166)

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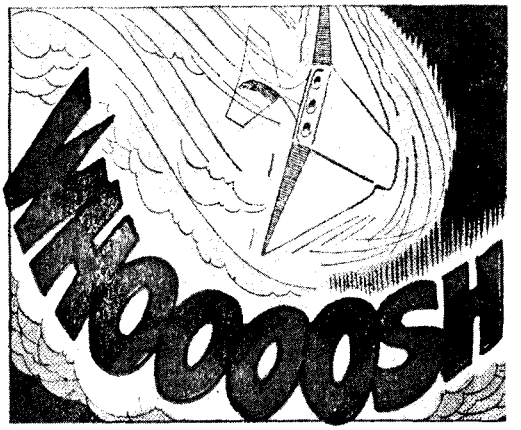
There is nothing inherently contradictory about a living organism's being immortal. . . Victory over death might well be entrusted to human agency and ingenuity.



NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

ARTHUR GIBSON

Portents were read into every event as the first Christian millennium neared its close. The talk was all about the imminent end of the world. It would be neither unexpected nor entirely banal if such omens should begin to be sensed by many in the next three decades. It can scarcely be imagined that universal history is geared exactly either to the Julian or the Gregorian calendar. But it must never be forgotten that a crucial contributory factor of the history-making of our planet is man's premonitions, previsions and the rhythms of his subconscious thrust. These lie at a far deeper level than mere blueprints for the future. And the cumulative evidence of our twentieth century points imperiously towards an imminent breakthrough into a new dispensation. The moment of that breakthrough should arrive, if mankind does not falter and thwart it, sometime in the early years of the 21st century and certainly before the end of that century's second decade.

The signs of the times in 1969 give foundation for the expectation that the breakthrough will involve chiefly the areas of astronautics, communications and international affairs, medicine and cosmology. The breakthrough itself will be a massive coordination of the results of all the revolutionary advances scored in each individual area: it will engender what can soberly be called a new heaven and a new earth, a new mankind and a new environment.

It would be criminally shortsighted, in the very lee of these imminent events, to attempt a preview of church and world in a half-century from now which would merely project current trends into the future with no provision for a quantum-leap.

There has been a welcome creative clarification in recent years of the species of relationship existing between church and world. Vatican II entitled its message on this subject not "The Church *and* the Modern World" nor yet "The Church *to* the Modern World," but "The Church *in* the Modern World." Church and world are related as was the Divine Word and his humanity. The humanity is not abrogated nor devoured by its union to the Incarnate God; but it is powered by an energy-thrust penetrating it and its space-time environment from beyond that environment.

It is perfectly legitimate to distinguish divinity and humanity in the church as in Christ and even deliberately to concentrate exclusively on the humanity. But *it is not that humanity that interacts with the world in the dimension of salvation and apotheosis.* The humanity of the church *is* the humanity of mankind united to the Redeeming Lord. Yet questions are still being posed about the church-world relationship which presuppose that both are exhaustively in the same dimension (even though the church may be a privileged salvation-enclave within the wider boundaries of humanity generally). Such an approach undercuts the very salvific power of the church and creates a quite impermissible picture of church and world as wary sparring partners or rivals for general hegemony.

The church can never rival the world; the church can only divinize the successive faces of humanity or stand as a massive reproach to what cannot be divinized. Yet there is still room here for human speculation and human prevision keyed to mobilization of resources and future implementation. For even as Jesus Christ willed to operate through *his* humanity (not mankind in the generic sense but that individual nature he had united in his Divine Person), so he wills to operate through the humanity of the church. But this humanity is not simply a group of the elect. It is the humanity of each age of mankind committed to the Lord. It is not the face of the church which changes in the visible shifts that cause such pother. It is the humanity of mankind that is slowly evolving and stands now before a crucial threshold.

Since, therefore, the relation of church and world is nothing less than the nexus between evolving mankind and deifying God, it is especially mandatory in a transitional age like ours that the deep long-range questions be asked in this regard, not the puttering quizzes of short-range propaganda.

What are the great lines of further evolution suggested by the long shadow of man's past and the seething focus of his present? And what must the humanity of the church do, what stance must the humanity of the church take, so that this further evolution may occur and be divinized?

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The lines of development in all the areas mentioned above are converging on a clear crisis-point: mankind is approaching the moment of zoological maturity, of integral human consciousness and of earth-leavetaking.

All the millennia since the emergence of man are but a tiny interval on the cosmic chronometer. During that period, man has thought of the earth as his home or at least as his permanent bivouac from which he believed (if he was religious-minded) he would spring directly *and individually* into a permanent habitation in the eternal abode of heaven. Yet man's instinct was sure-footed and forced him steadily through tumultuous migrations to ever new frontiers. When Alexander wept that there were no new worlds left to conquer, it was not merely a glory-mad autocrat who cried: it was man's sure instinct that the path *must* continue, that it was sheer bathos to be arrested by the treachery of a circle. Now man has almost reached the moment of the inception of a new migration; and his sound instinct urges him on; only an anti-evolutionary inertia threatens to hold him back.

I am not here speaking of a mere series of isolated television spectaculars but of the development of a full-fledged commerce with, and migration and settlement of, far planets that will introduce man into a new dimension. The basic assignments to be resolved in the generic science of astronautics are the following: in the order of practical engineering, a new fueling concept, a new and far lighter spacecraft-design; in the order of theory, a solution of the problem created when the speed of light is accepted as the upper limit in locomotion. There are increasing indications that none of these problems is beyond the capacity of man the scientist in the very near future. The first two are problems of practical engineering which require imaginative thrust combined with massive attention to detail; and, above all, the pooling of all research resources on a global scale. The last is initially a problem in pure speculative research which will be more adequately soluble if the Einsteinean articulation is not promoted to the stultifying status of an unimpeachable dogma.

The entire weight of the church's persuasion and support must be thrown behind this effort so that mankind shall not falter. Specifically the eschatological dimension must be elongated, along the lines prophetically foreshadowed by Teilhard, to include the long voyaging through the new heavens. Above all, the stress must more and more be shifted to the eschatology of man as an integral species, with a dawning integral common consciousness. Donne's wistful poetic insight must be transformed into an invigorating positive hope.

To be sure, and in the strictest sense, every man's death diminishes men for I *am* involved in mankind. But the dawning of the common consciousness will make each death far more like the disintegration of a single cell. The great integral organism, mankind, only now arriving at self-consciousness, will continue and it is to the ultimate fate of that organism that the church must increasingly devote attention. This fate will become more consciously personalized as the self-consciousness of mankind the species grows out of its present twilight into a sharp noonday awareness. More and more the individual will realize that his own fate, temporal and eternal, is bound up with that of the species.

The Dawn of the Superman

It is in this light that the arguments against the space drive derived from the need for resolution of pressing terrestrial problems seem especially shabby and specious. So long as human beings remain adamantly individualistic and draw concentric circles of merely expanded egocentricity round their individual egos (family-centricity, ethnocentricity, ideological bloc-centricity, anything short of anthropocentricity and even that still an open circle to possible new encounters with other created intelligences, whether carbon-based or not), so long will every effort to resolve questions of justice and still more pressing questions of living identification and love creep forward at a snail's pace to be fatally outdistanced by the gathering tensions.

Surely nothing could be more calculated to ensure precisely this universal identification with the species than the interpolation of a new dimension, the outward thrust of space. For it must not be forgotten that the tensions riddling the unity of the species at the moment are not entirely the result of sluggishness of heart. Partly these tensions result from a not entirely unfounded fear that the population explosion will ultimately exhaust, not so much and not in the first instance the material resources (though that, too, might come with alarming swiftness, say some analysts), but preeminently the psychic breathing-space, that one day that baby will be born who will produce fatally exasperating crowding (just as it is said that the one automobile will appear on the streets of Megalopolis which will create an insoluble traffic jam).

It might seem at a casual glance that not even the space drive would be capable of uniting mankind even into reasonable cooperative neighborliness, let alone into the almost unimaginable organic unity delineated above. Yet solid signs and symptoms point to the imminent possibility of such a revolutionary event. The communications revolutions of the last fifty years have done much more than simply to make news available everywhere virtually instantaneously—itself a revolutionary event, abolishing forever the "lag for consideration" and forcing every power executive, large and small, to consider seriously the *immediate impact* of any action (or omission) on a global scale. These communications revolutions have drastically jolted book-oriented and visually perceiving man, for the moment at least. The emergent culture is auditory and quantum-like in its unrelenting discontinuity. Its center is everywhere and it demands that

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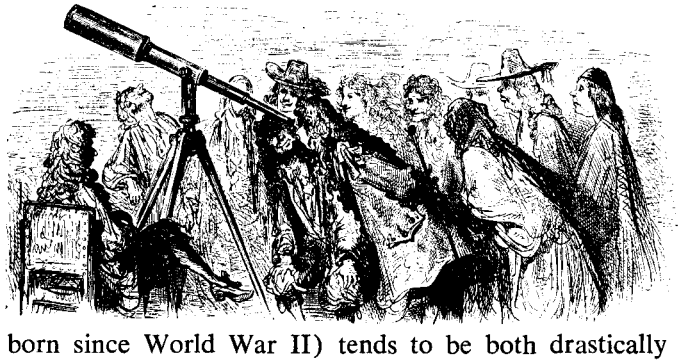
total commitment that surpasses mere reflective collaboration and leaps into the realm of grace and charity which, because it has no viewpoint, can more readily accommodate to the unremitting hail of information-bits requiring instant processing and drastic, perpetually modified reaction.

It was a recent conversation with Marshall McLuhan that clarified for me this new element of our human situation. McLuhan himself seems more than a little wary of the electronic age and recalled that loose talk about the Mystical Body of Christ in this connection was criminally dangerous, that we might be closer to the Body of Antichrist, that Satan's name Lucifer had obvious nexus with electricity. Yet McLuhan himself in that same conversation made a suggestion for the creative use of worldwide TV which points up the positive elements of the situation: cancer-research might easily make the breakthrough to a cure if the mass of data were flashed to all viewers over a period of several days during which worldwide TV facilities were devoted only to this project. What even the most dedicated band of relatively isolated researchers (desperately small in numbers compared to the whole human race or to the mountainous mass of data) could not spot the *coordinated vision* of a worldwide audience might easily detect. This would, I contend, be nothing less than the species-consciousness in action.

There are other signs and symptoms, too easily dismissed by a superficial inspection as merely interesting novelties to while away a rainy evening. Seven of these symptoms may be mentioned here.

1. This generation of the young (all human beings



born since World War II) tends to be both drastically migrant and quickly at home everywhere. They roam the world with open minds, sensitive perceptions and unquiet hearts. They are not mere happy uncommitted tourists: they are seeking something and I am persuaded it is precisely this operative functional consciousness of mankind as an awakening integral species.

2. The most conservative statesmen of the great European powers have successfully pushed for a merger of resources that transcends national boundaries with the argument that *this is the only way to maintain the identity of European culture* against the two superpowers and a dangerously rising China (as Konrad Adenauer repeatedly asserts in his *Memoirs*). This is one of those regrettable way-stations on the road to anthropocentricity but it shows the way the winds of change are blowing.

3. Those who have sincerely devoted themselves to projects for improvement of race relations and aid to the hopeless and helpless have, *in practical experience,* become deeply impressed with the conviction that no aid will succeed that is not prompted and animated by a deep identification. Harvey Cox and Father duBay have repeatedly formulated the thought that the inner-city worker who does not realize that he is really working on himself and his own problem will be of dubious value indeed.

4. The increasing possibility of organ transplants has faced many rugged individualists with major psychological and moral problems. But the transplant practice will increase and there can be no mistaking the deep psychological satisfaction (and wonder) of the donors who have been able consciously to agree to such a contribution on their part to solidarity at the level of species.

5. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has been adhered to by a number of small powers who have thus sacrificed personal ambitions to a greater good *they recognized as identifiable with their own.* Though there is still a highly regrettable anti-Chinese bias in this whole drive, it is once again a symptom of the deep-moving currents; nor should it be forgotten that the People's Republic of China has coupled every one of its successful nuclear tests with an eloquent appeal for control and peaceful use of this fearsome power.

6. The United Nations' Organization is still very much alive despite its many patent humiliations and despite the often quite well-founded demands for its overhaul, demands originating all along the political spectrum from arch-conservatives to the People's Republic of China. The most crying need is for a genuine globalization of this rough draft of a world government by the inclusion of the huge nation of China. But the significant symptom beneath the barrage of propaganda is that very few indeed are suggesting that the United Nations could be dispensed with entirely.

7. The last quarter-century has seen a major revival of interest in and commitment to a group of disciplines all of which seem improbable in the context of a technological civilization yet all of which share the goal of a breakthrough to a higher dimension of consciousness than that of the mere human individual: parapsychology, transcendental meditation, psychic research, astrology, even drug-experimentation ought not to be dismissed out of hand as aberrations to be suppressed. They may well indicate a groping after an evolutionary event on whose threshold we stand.

What the arch-individualist Nietzsche violently strove to obtain by a thrust that effectively precluded its realization seems on the point of implementation by the strong currents of creative evolution: the emergence of the true Superman. I choose this designation in preference to the

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New Mankind because we have had as yet no experience of a consciously integral species on our own small and maybe atypical planet and the specific designation Mankind smacks too much of depersonalization. The emergence of the species-consciousness would only involve such horrifying depersonalization if it were effected by some other powering agency than charity. For, as Teilhard reminds us, love is the one power that can unite without submerging or destroying. It is simply that we are sluggish at realizing the extent to which love can unite to produce a genuinely new reality, despite all our experience with human reproduction.

Clearly the church must lend tactful support and sensitive understanding to this immense evolutionary drive, the more so since there are sobering indications of the extent to which it has lapsed from the control of charity into the hegemony-area of dubious totalitarian force. But this drive is clearly indicated, by the whole pattern of man's evolution, to be the very threshold of his zoological maturity and the last thing the church can in conscience do is to fulminate against it simply on the grounds that it contains dangers of perversion. Rather must the church resolutely embrace the dangers and by consistent conscious action eliminate them and divinize the drive.

The Catholic Christian tradition is especially psychologically suited to such a positive approach to this drive. It is therefore less than edifying to see so many indications of a Protestantizing individualism emerging within that tradition in recent years. The point here is quite simply this: no intelligent attitude can be assumed to any partial phenomenon (middle-class Western society, student protest, proletarian revolutions, Third World or even the very notion of change) unless the imminence of this crucial breakthrough to species-consciousness is accorded full importance as inevitable in fact and desperately in need of divinization.

The Age of the Immortals

A newly self-aware species thrusting to the stars would require a drastically expanded life-span even of its individual cellular members in order to cope with the expanded dimensions and frame of reference of its assignment in any galactic and intergalactic locomotion system of which we can meaningfully speak, i.e., abstracting from the possibility of a breakthrough which would make the very concept of distance irrelevant. Of the resultant situation we could only draw entirely imaginative pictures. But there is solid evidence in our own day that medicine is, in total abstraction at least at the conscious level from any such cosmonautical requirements, forging ahead to probe the thresholds of immense breakthroughs.

The life expectancy and the actual life-span of Terran man has been quietly but persistently creeping upward in the last century. The causes are a combination of improved pre-natal and child care, better nourishment and the conquest of almost all contagious diseases. Cancer and cardiac afflictions can now receive the concentrated attention of medicine. There are peripheral but scalding tragedies of malformation and mental retardation to mar the picture; but the steadily loping advance of genetics, both analytic and now synthetic should make possible before the end of the century interventions in the very germ-plasm, not only to forestall such tragedies but even to initiate the respective breeding-in or breeding-out of desirable or undesirable psychic characteristics. It is to be hoped that the church will here be governed by her own massively sane ancient doctrine too hastily and superficially pooh-poohed by self-styled expert critics. The church has steadily contended that original sin is transmitted in the germ-plasm. As we shall show directly, medical science will never succeed in breeding out the very possibility of the phenomenon ecclesiastically described as original sin. But surely any assaults on factors complicating and exacerbating it should be welcomed by the sane Catholic tradition.

Yet it is quite another threshold against which medicine is now pushing with increasing concentration of forces. It is being contended that cell degeneration, the radical cause of senility and fatal disintegration even in the absence of attacks by hostile agencies, is not the normal state of the human body. It is beyond all reasonable doubt that the fatal blow is being administered to the human composite more and more frequently in our day by psychic causes: all that complex of tensions, worries, competitive exertions and nameless dreads that trigger the various forms of cardiac failure or prompt the desperate measure of self-destruction. These causes will be increasingly eliminated with the emergence of a species-consciousness *animated and divinized by operational charity*. But what of the final threshold, the ultimate terminal?

I do not presume to chronologize in this essay any of the forecasts, for even their sequence cannot be predicted with any certainty. I merely say they will all occur within a single thrust-period cosmically speaking; and I see clear indications that they may all have occurred by the end of the next century. There is nothing inherently contradictory about a living organism's being immortal. I heard Barnabas Ahern suggest in a talk in Rome during Vatican II that the victory over death might well be entrusted to human agency and ingenuity. Such a breakthrough would, of course, have ultimately revolutionizing consequences and make incomparably more urgent the continuing drive to the stars.

The removal of the threat of death would reveal in the raw the true essence of sin, as a disorder not simply calculated to expose man to the horrors of hell at an unforeseen moment in the future but rather automatically exposing him to that quintessential hell in every present which is the closing of the circle of self-sufficiency around any reality less than the Supremely Real. But of the

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moral dangers of such a natural immortality as likewise of the moral challenge of the world we have previsioned, we can speak only after a consideration of the profoundest of all changes that would be wrought by such a coordinated revolution. This change would involve a breakthrough initially in the area of cosmology and consequently in the realm of asceticism, morality and even sacramental piety.

The earliest Western philosophers sought for a unitary substance underlying the multiplicity of phenomena. Their candidates were basically material (water, fire, air or the basic ontic plethora and the essential pluralism of atoms). The deep insights of these early thinkers have been too lightly dismissed by successive, more sophisticated ages (sophistication comes from sophistry!). Einstein, the scion of a long line of speculative scientists was likewise seeking for a unitary formula and, though he never found it, left an uneasy and propulsive heritage to his successors. The indications have multiplied in the last three decades among spokesmen for the most diverse branches of science that a breakthrough is awaited almost momentarily on this cosmological front.

Religious traditions have tended to see what they call "spirit" as the ultimate reality and have often depressed matter to the dubious status of an unreal projection of spirit or, in the darker madnesses of Manicheanism, to the horrendous status of the active principle of evil. It is a special tragedy that the Christian tradition should have fallen victim to this tendency since the Incarnation is its radical and total refutation. In an ecstasy of imprecision, matter has been denigrated simultaneously for its massive inertia and for its fragile evanescence. The inertia notion has been exploded in the last half century by the whirl of activity discovered in the heart of the atom. As for the evanescence, it is quite patent that it is the forms or configurations assumed by matter which are evanescent, not matter itself.

But though, rightly conceived, matter is neither totally inert nor yet evanescent, it does share two quasi-parameters with the God of religious tradition: it is not properly conceptualizable as an *entity;* and it is simultaneously supremely dynamic and supremely self-identical.

There was a day almost exactly one hundred years ago when Lenin felt he had to sound the alarm against the "electricians' " dematerialization of matter, its resolution into sheer energy. The idea is still tempting to recalcitrant but open-minded and perceptive spiritualists. How fine if matter could be conceived merely as a dragging coagulation of agile Energy (neologism for Spirit)!

In the light of the previsioned breakthrough in cosmology it would be impermissible to assign such inferior status to matter. For energy and matter would appear as *equally relative and tensional states of a more basic reality*. This would effectively squash the hideously and lethally anthropomorphic notion of God as Pure Spirit (an extrapolation from the mental-psychic side or dimension of the human composite) who created souls by a process close to engendering and matter only by a haughty act of creation. It would be seen that the created reality known as spirit and the created reality known as matter are equally relative tensional states of a reality uniting both. This reality in the religious interpretation would still be created, a true *'en kai pan* not bastardized into a God-surrogate. But God would be viewed, with deeper analogical wisdom, as uniting in transcendent fashion the roots of the created reality called spirit *and the roots of the created reality called matter*. And the Incarnation would be seen as a marriage truly made in heaven.

No longer could the ancient lie be touted that matter wars and rebels and instigates evil against spirit, that the disorders of our world stem from the crude disorderliness of base matter. The Pure Spirit who is cause of all sin, primordial poisoning fountainhead of all evil, would stand properly exposed. It would be evident that the ultimate tension is between creatureliness and Creator, that this tension is a globally engulfing one but that it always originates in the spiritual dimension and infests matter from there. It would be realized that the elusive principle we call matter and which has no entitative reality of its own is an omen and sub-entitative antipode of the super-entitative reality God. It would be seen that the tension between creatureliness and Creator reaches a dramatic high point with the emergence of *entities* and a fortiori created spiritual entities; and that the tension can culminate only in a hypostatic reunion or in a plunge into the "storm of darkness" spoken of by Jude.

It would be sheer shallow lunacy to imagine that the previsioned breakthrough to integral functional species-consciousness, the outward thrust to the far planets, the acquisition of natural immortality or even the realization of a truly integral cosmology could free the evolving human creature from the danger of sin. As Gandalf warned Frodo Baggins: "Always after a defeat and a respite, the Shadow takes another shape and grows again."

What these forward thrusts can and must do is to direct the attention of that evolving creature to the concentrated pustule of that sin's poison, to the real threat of the Shadow. Sin has been variously described, in the imperfect evolving vocabularies of the past, articulations of an evolving awareness, as being an offense against God's majesty, a guilt-producing action, a threat to the eternal happiness of individual man. None of these articulations was entirely wrong or inapposite; yet none uncovered the real venom either: *The radical threat of sin is to the course and consummation of* evolving creation. Sin is the shadow cast by the grasping closing circle of the created reality striving after total self-centeredness and outright self-sufficiency and radical autonomy. It will therefore emerge in ever newer forms as the evolution of created reality progresses.

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There are already unmistakable signs available to the world of 1969 to prove that a trans-individual human entity can sin in a way peculiar to itself and irreducible to the sum-total of the sinning of its constituent members. Indeed the question of collective responsibility ceased in 1945 to be a subject of pleasant theoretical scholastic debate and faced judges with cruel dilemmas. Their dilemmas have not yet been entirely solved for no way has been found to punish a state as such for its sins as a state except the dubiously adequate, dubiously corrective method of financial reparations.

The crucial issue here is that such entities as states, cartels and even ideological power-blocs are giving clear evidence of a kind of perverse and damaging action which can neither be reductively analyzed into a complex sum-total of individual defalcations nor yet contained by the disciplining of such individuals as are unlucky enough to be caught. It is urgently imperative that the church direct the closest and most sustained attention to the development of a social morality, a morality of human organizations, political and economic, and ultimately a morality of the new Superman. This is not for an instant to suggest that the morality of the individual is outmoded: individual free man is still responsible for his moral acts; by these acts he can not only offend God and damage his individual fellow-man but (and this is increasingly serious and important) damage as well the universal human fabric. The morality of the individual will always have to remain; but it is essential that the morality of the integrally-functioning executive species be plumbed and elaborated before the church is faced with this new prodigy, potential giant of virtue, potential ogre of vice. And in the elaboration of this morality, with no undue neglect of commutative and distributive justice, the attention will be more and more concentrated on the capacity of each act to close or open the circle that is this created reality, the species man. For it is this ultimate thrust of human evolution which is of crucial importance. The perceptive and open-minded man can scarcely any longer entertain seriously the contention that Terran man is the only intelligent created species in the universe.

We have noted that man's tendency to stricture has always created dreadful tensions even within his own species. Always, from first conscious cell to all-embracing perfect creature, the only virtuous tendency is openness and readiness for new bondings (always, however, open bondings). And virtue here has a biologico-cosmological meaning as well as a strictly moral one. Only such openness is really powerful, really a gulf and channel for the great Power. Vice squanders the Power by clutching it in a restrictive grasp. The threat of that Shadow will always accompany man; indeed the Shadow will assume forms and proportions entirely bizarre and paralyzingly horrifying to present-day man as the evolutionary drama races against the loping threat of the Shadow. But there is a steadying hope if the church can and does nurture evolving man and if man but responds at the crucial threshold to the Power that can dissipate the Shadow.

The mediation of the Incarnation's powering and liberating ingress into the integrated, matured and outward-thrusting human fact: that will be the business of the church in man's expanded world of 2019.

ROBERT NEVILLE

FATHER GIBSON'S POP CULTURE

Gibson raises the right questions about the destiny of mankind, underscoring the need both for a new social role for philosophy and for a new discipline to educate philosophers for it. Gibson's questions are of the greatest importance for world society, and no one is equipped to deal with them. The social role has not been invented yet: proper form for answers to these questions is unlikely to be intellectual, expressed in books and magazines. The discipline has not been invented either: how can the necessary information be learned? Asking the questions, as Gibson does, will help call forth the new philosopher.

But I suspect Gibson in this essay has not invented the new role or new discipline because his essay reflects a distinction between pop and sophisticated culture, and he comes down on the former, that is, the wrong side. Although the distinction is complex and unstable, it is based on at least these two contrasts:

(1) Pop culture *reacts* to social forces, even when its genius is clairvoyant about their nature. Sophisticated culture, by contrast, *appropriates* the forces at their roots; its style is to charm them into a new form that enhances rather than frustrates excellence in the new society.

(2) Pop culture has a limited experiential range; its import tends to fit previously prepared responses. Sophisticated culture, by contrast, is reflectively critical of its experiential range, transcending it where possible.

Gibson is correct that "sophistication" is related to "sophistry." The root "sophia," however, has always applied to the virtue that best articulates a culture's excellence; before the sophists it meant the virtue of oral recitation and after them it meant abstract philosophical thought in Plato's sense. It will come to mean whatever virtue, a new sense of philosophy, fulfills the social role with the discipline that can handle Gibson's questions. Needless to say, sophistication is not to be defined even now, let alone in 50 years, by the academy.

There are signs that the distinction between pop and sophisticated culture is crumbling. Still, I believe Gibson's essay reflects the distinction as drawn, that it works in the context of pop culture, and that the new philosopher ought to operate in the context of sophistication. Two examples:

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The essay seems to identify the forces leading to the crisis in mankind by obvious manifestations rather than underlying dynamics. The discussions of technology, scientific theory and social movements should appropriate these phenomena in scientific ways, not through popular representations. (But perhaps I misread Gibson's intent in this essay.) The problem of appropriating all these things, of course, is the problem of the new discipline.

A more serious example is that the essay's range of experience is limited to western culture, and Gibson would be the first to agree all cultures should count. The convergence of men into "Terran" man cannot be interpreted prima facie in terms of evolution, a scientific notion alien to most of the world's religious and cultural experience. Christian theology will remain at an impasse until theologians have digested cultures they have only read about in translation, and that will take a generation of schooling. To most non-western cultures evolutionary theologies seem materialistic and to conservative Christians they seem callous to history. The best to be said for evolutionary theologies is that their scientific orientation reflects the technology uniting men; but the meaning of technology is part of the crisis too, when non-western men get in on it.

A more radical questioning of the destiny of men will show Gibson's topic more difficult than he indicates, however grateful we are for his beginning.

The notion of community has undergone significant change: community has become an open-ended social reality. We have come, thus, to an open-ended understanding of the church.

THE NEW ECCLESIOLOGY

GREGORY BAUM

When we say church, we no longer think pope and bishops. This we have been taught by the remarkable doctrinal evolution that has taken place since the convocation of Vatican II. When we say church, we do not even think exclusively of the Christian community. Ecclesiology, in the new perspective, does not deal first and principally with the ecclesiastical community of believers and then only, as an afterthought, with the rest of humanity. Ecclesiology brings out the manner in which salvation comes to men everywhere and hence has to do with human life in community. Church, then, in this new perspective, is the whole of mankind inasmuch as it is touched by divine grace.

The ecclesial mystery is offered in all communities of men. Wherever people are, according to the doctrine of original sin, they are tempted to play terrible games with each other. Each man out of his loneliness seeks to triumph over the others. The community sets up processes generating sickness and isolation. Yet, according to the Good News revealed in Jesus Christ, this is only part of the story about man in community. Marvelous things also take place wherever people are. Divine grace is offered in community. As people talk to one another, as they listen and respond, as they open themselves to the other and cooperate in the common concern, they are summoned and freed to leave the destructive past behind and enter creatively into the future. Thanks to God's presence to human life the community becomes the matrix out of which we come to be redeemed people. This is the ecclesial mystery. Man does not come to be alone. He comes to be, rather, in a process of dialogue and sharing in which other people and ultimately the whole community are involved, a process wounded by the sinful dimension of human life yet again and again renewed and transformed by God's presence. The ecclesial mystery, proclaimed in Jesus Christ, makes the human community the mother of salvation. Outside the church there is no salvation.

Ecclesiology, in this new perspective, is the theological study of the human community. Ecclesiology seeks to discern the structures in society which destroy human life and multiply evil: more than that and especially it seeks to detect the processes in society which offer healing to people and build up the human community. Talking about church, therefore, refers primarily to the redemptive structures operative in the community, such as dialogue, cooperation, participation, the transcending of boundaries, etc. Ecclesiology proposes principles and symbols by which the Christian is able to understand and evaluate the past from which he comes and more especially the present culture in which he lives and which he is summoned to redefine.

Thanks to God's gracious presence to human life, the church belongs to the definition of mankind. It should be possible, therefore, to develop an ecclesiology that deals with man's secular life in community, and it may well be

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that within a few years most ecclesiological studies will have little to do with traditional ecclesiastical problems.

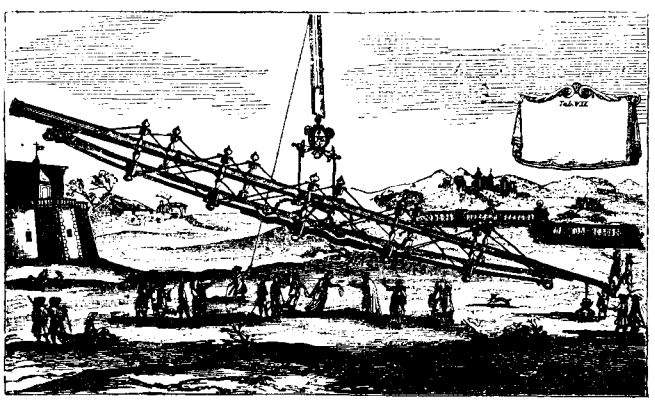
But what is the Christian church? The redemptive mystery that takes place among people everywhere is embodied and revealed in Jesus Christ and proclaimed and celebrated in the Christian church. Only after considering mankind as a whole and speaking of sin and redemption present in it, does it make sense to speak of the Christian church. This is the inversion that has taken place in recent ecclesiology. While in the past we were willing to speak of the Christian church (or even the Roman Catholic church) first and primarily and then only add, by way of appendix, some remarks on the human family as a whole, contemporary ecclesiology begins with the universal history of salvation embracing mankind and then only turns to the visible manifestation of this universal mystery in the Christian church. In the past we were able to define it in terms of the elements that make up ecclesiastical life. We were able to define it without invoking the whole human race. Today, thanks to the change of perspective, we realize that the Christian church cannot be defined without bringing in the whole human race. Christian church must be defined in terms of its function or—in more traditional terminology —its mission in humanity.

What is the mission of the Christian church? In the past when we tended to restrict divine grace to the church and its sacraments, we regarded it as the church's mission to extend its boundaries among the nations of the world. We tended to regard the church as the unique means of salvation. We invested it with all our hopes. We entertained the highest expectations in its regard. And when the church disappointed us, when it did not live up to our elevated image, when it turned out to be a mediocre community led by pedestrian and unimaginative chiefs, we were deeply disturbed. A monopolistic understanding of church is bound to lead to despair.

To invest a community of men with exclusive hope is always dangerous. People today suffer painful confusion because the government has represented for them the total good of society or the university the unique matrix of learning or the church the exclusive sacrament of salvation. According to Christian teaching, we recall, the primary means of grace is neither the sacramental liturgy nor the ecclesiastical community but life itself. Life, human life, saves. Because of God's redemptive presence to human history, salvation is offered in the social fabric out of which we come to be.

The Christian community serves this redemptive mystery present in the human community. The church's mission, we are now able to say, is to promote communication among people born into estrangement. The church tries to detect the demonic in the present age: and then seeks to discern the structures of healing present in the wider community and to serve these structures so that the obstacles to fellowship and growth will be overcome. If the demonic in life may be described as forces of alienation and division, then the church's mission could be defined as discerning and serving the structures that lead people into friendship and truth and making them more truly human. This mission is a ministry of the Word: for it is God's Word that enables the church to detect the demonic in society, to recognize the patterns of renewal already at work among people, and to engage in a dialogue with others that fosters reconciliation.

If the Christian church is defined by its mission or function in mankind, it can no longer be thought of as a society. A society is set off against other societies. Those who live outside of the society do not enter into the definition of it. But the whole of mankind, we have said, does enter into the definition of the Christian church. I



have suggested elsewhere (*The Credibility of the Church Today,* Herder and Herder) that the sociological model for understanding the Christian church today is "the outer-oriented movement." A movement, we note, is defined by its mission or function in the wider community to which it belongs. A movement cannot simply be defined in terms drawn from its own inner life. But this is exactly what we have claimed for the Christian church. The church is a movement of men dedicated to the redemptive transformation of society or; in more secular terms, to the humanization and reconciliation of divided humanity. The point I wish to make in this article is that the church-as-movement does not simply refer to a future development: the church is becoming movement now.

Someone might object that if the church is understood as movement, it is no longer community and thus deviates from the biblical image. My reply to this is that in recent years the very notion of community has undergone a significant change: community has become a more open-ended social reality. We have come, for instance, to an open-ended understanding of the church. The communion created by the Spirit in the church does not stop at its boundary lines but extends to people beyond the church who are open to the same Spirit. Today Christians wish to participate in the marvelous things God does in all the Christian churches and beyond these in the wider human community. Today men no longer define themselves in terms of a single community: they belong to

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many communities on different levels and in different ways. Some of the communities to which Christians belong are Christian and some are not. Because of this multi-leveled participation in several communities, it is possible to speak of the ecclesiastical community, the church, as an outer-oriented movement. Through his mission, that is, through dialogue and participation, the Christian stands as much outside as inside the baptismal community.

In this connection I must express some hesitations in regard to the so-called underground church. Some people involved in the underground are eagerly looking for the perfect human community. They long for a community which fulfills all their needs and in terms of which they are able to define themselves. This search is illusory, especially in our own day when to be human means to participate in several communities and to remain critical in regard to all of them. The longing desire for the warm and understanding total community is the search for the good mother, which is bound to end in disappointment and heartbreak. There are no good mothers and fathers: there is only the divine mystery summoning and freeing us to grow up.

Characteristic of a movement is that the followers participate in it in the manner chosen by themselves. In a society, membership is clearly defined. You are a member if your name is on a list; and whether you take an active part in the life of the community or not, you are equally a member. In a movement, however, it is not so easy to define membership. The boundary lines of a movement cannot be clearly defined. For it is up to the people themselves, up to their own responsibility, to determine the ways in which they participate in the social movement.

Today, we insist, Christians participate in the church according to their own responsible choice. They choose the ways in which they exercise their mission. They decide for themselves where they must promote communication, engage in conflict with the powers of darkness, and serve the ecclesial mystery in society. They choose where and how often they assist at the liturgy, they decide how many meetings they attend, they determine the pattern of being a Christian and a Catholic. In the US today, to the great honor of the church, some Christians have decided that for them fidelity to the Kingdom means to go to prison.

Before looking more closely at the passage from society to movement in the Catholic church, we must raise the ecumenical question. What is happening to the Christian churches? The ecumenical movement which brought these churches into conversation and cooperation at one time performed an important service in promoting critical reflection and bringing about a totally new sense of Christian fellowship. All Christians today are greatly indebted to the ecumenical movement. It is hard to overestimate the significance of this ecclesiastical movement for the church of the 20th century. At the same time, the official ecumenism has become so highly institutionalized today that it is hardly a movement any more. One may speak of "committee ecumenism." Since official ecumenical gatherings bring together representatives of the various Christian churches, present-day ecumenism is not free to raise the fundamental issues of the Christian life and call into question some of the structures of these churches. "Committee ecumenism" gives a guarantee to the churches that the embarrassing questions will not be raised. For this reason conservative churchmen of today are in favor of ecumenism. Even Pope Paul visits the World Council of Churches.

The more authentic movement towards Christian unity that is visible among us today is based on the conversion of Christians in all the churches to a more contemporary understanding of the gospel. What Christians are seeking and, in fact, partially finding, is a way of transcending the doctrinal and institutional traditions that have become obstacles to the gospel by putting into words and embodying in structures the meaning of God's self-revelation in Christ today. Christians in all the churches have begun to experience the call and the meaning of Jesus Christ in a new way and theologians of all traditions have begun to give expression to this experience, in fidelity to the biblical witness and in keeping with the deepest intention of the ecclesiastical tradition. The movement towards Christian unity passes through the contemporary re-interpretation of the gospel and is promoted by new forms of Christian action in society.

The Church as Movement

This movement of renewal and unity is not necessarily accelerated through the organic union of the churches. Conversely this movement may make great strides and involve vast numbers of Christians even if the churches to which they belong remain organizationally distinct. Yet the ecumenical model here described is not at all a federation of the churches! The process towards unity passes through a more radical institutional transformation. What takes place, rather, is the passage of the churches from being societies to being, sociologically speaking, a movement.

In his *The Americanization of the Unconscious* (Science House Inc.) John Seeley distinguishes two kinds of revolution. One type removes the ruling class and replaces it by another. The other generates new values and thus initiates society into a total reinterpretation of its tasks and inevitably assigns new roles to the traditional offices. In this kind of revolution the governing class may well stay where it is, it may still wear the same kind of robes and be addressed by the same titles, but what changes radically is their role in the life of the society. It seems to me that what is taking place in the church at this time is a radical transvaluation of values, based on

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the contemporary experience of the gospel. The passage of church from society to movement is a kind of revolution, but it does not necessarily dethrone the traditional ecclesiastical leaders. What happens, rather, is that they assume a new role.

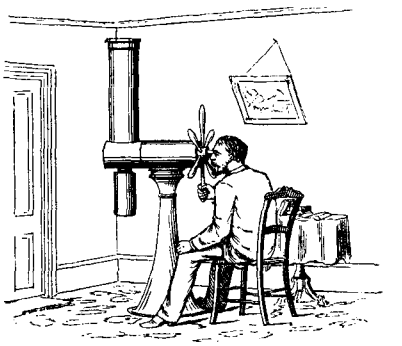
As I analyze contemporary Christian life in North America, I do not foresee the disappearance of the great Christian traditions—Catholic, Protestant, and Independent Evangelical. These traditions are bearers of great wealth, they have their own creativity, they generate their own self-consciousness. Correspondingly, each ecclesiastical tradition has its own peculiar pathology. While Christians of all churches rejoice in the gospel together, engage in common efforts in society, oppose together the resistance to the new life that is being offered, and experience a profound sense of brotherhood, they still try to define themselves in terms of their own Christian tradition. They want to be faithful to the authentic witness of the past, through which the gospel has come to them and in which they found deep Christian meaning. They want to identify themselves with what they regard as the divine tradition of their church. Even though the Christian church is becoming movement at this time, it will continue to make sense to speak, for instance, of an identifiable (Roman) Catholic church within the wider movement.

Some readers may think my remarks on the radical transition from church-as-society to church-as-movement implied the rejection of the Catholic church as we have known it. This is not my view. I hold, rather, that the Spirit who enables Christians to enter the new age and reinterpret the gospel, creates a new self-understanding in the Catholic church and thus continues to recreate her self-identity.

When we had a static understanding of reality, of people and of institutions, we tended to take self-identity for granted. We thought that self-identity was a given reality, a necessary part of being a particular being, and hence could not be lost. Self-identity was assured in an institution if it did not change. Clinging to the inherited structures and repeating the same doctrines were the certain way of keeping the Catholic church the same. But today when we have acquired a dynamic or developmental understanding of reality, of people and of institutions, we realize that self-identity cannot be taken for granted. Self-identity can be lost. People and communities must constantly become what they are, and this process of becoming is never simply the repetition of the past. A person or an institution that does not grow, deteriorates and ultimately loses its self-identity. In order to remain self-identical, we must constantly reinterpret and repossess the past and move creatively into the future. The person who does not grow becomes retarded and eventually ceases to be himself, and an institution that does not repeatedly review its function and its operations, adapt them to new needs and improve them according to new insights, becomes obsolete, out of touch with reality, and eventually ceases to be itself. Immobilism destroys the identity of a living being. An institution remains itself only if it is dedicated to the process of creating itself again and again.

The self-identity of the Catholic church, we insist, is not assured by immobilism. To assure that this church remains identical with itself we must in every age reinterpret her doctrine and restructure her social life in keeping with divine tradition of the past and the Spirit-created demands of the present. While it is true that in a certain sense the Catholic church has defined who we are as Catholics, it is also true that we Catholics are involved in defining what is the church. We take part in the coming to be of the church. We test the new experience of the gospel with the abiding norm, the scriptures, and check it with the church's past witness. To understand its meaning we engage in dialogue and even some conflict in the church until, thanks to the Spirit acting among us, the whole community enters into a new self-consciousness. In this way all Catholics are engaged in creating the church's self-identity.

The uniqueness of the Catholic church enables it to make a contribution to the wider Christian movement which, it seems to me, cannot be offered by any other ecclesiastical tradition. The Roman Catholic concept of papal-episcopal collegiality can be interpreted as assuring the unity and universality of the church-as-movement and the Roman Catholic concept of an ongoing divine tradition can be interpreted as providing a way for successively reformulating the gospel in every age.



Let us look more closely at what happens in the Catholic church as it ceases to be society and becomes movement. Considering the church as movement, we have said, does not deny its institutional character. A movement is an institutional reality. A movement usually expresses itself in meetings of various kinds. It is guided and strengthened by coordinated efforts and some comprehensive planning. A movement is usually supported by a network of centers and institutions all doing their work in comparative freedom yet striving for closer communication and interrelation among themselves. While the institutional network promoting the movement may be the bearer of some authority, this authority is never jurisdiction over people. In this it differs from the authority exercised in a society. In a society, the govern-

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ment has jurisdiction over all the members. In a movement, people contribute in many ways to the making of policy and respect the institutional authority that spells out policy in a definitive way, but they are never subjects under a government. They remain free; they may decide to hang loose in regard to this or that particular policy.

It was only when the Christian church regarded itself as society and attempted to understand its own inner life analogous to the Roman secular society that the apostolic power of the ecclesiastical ministry was understood as jurisdiction. The concept of jurisdiction is not necessarily linked to the hierarchical ministry in apostolic succession. It is no break with the Catholic tradition to conceive of pope and bishops exercising their apostolic power (apart from the sacramental ministry) in coordinating all the groups in the Catholic church, in trying to formulate the new insights arising in the community, in formulating policy and clarifying teaching on the basis of the church's ongoing experience, and even defining the core meaning of the gospel for its age, *without exercising any jurisdiction* over peoples and territories.

It is my contention that the shift from society to movement is already taking place in the North American cities, even if this may not be acknowledged by the hierarchy. When we ask the question where in fact the Catholic people are being inspired, instructed, nourished and built up in Christ, we can no longer point to the parish. It is rather a wide network of centers—chapels, discussion groups, lecture series, press columns, radio and television programs, worship services held in different places, private conversations and reading books that perform this ministry. People no longer feel bound to the territorial parish; they elect their own style of being a Catholic and if the present legislation of the church interferes with the plans they have for the future, they feel free to solve the problem in their own way. For instance, conscientious couples who wish to enter a mixed marriage but find the present legislation incompatible with their ideals often feel free to get married according to their own choice in another ceremony, without regarding themselves as cut off from the liturgical life of the Catholic church. Catholic men and women whose first marriage fell apart often feel free to enter into a second union and at the same time to remain participants in the Catholic liturgy. Catholic people have discovered the conditional character of canon law, and while they appreciate the need for general directives, they no longer regard themselves as bound by them in all situations.

Priests and nuns, who belong to the establishment in a special way and usually depend financially on the organization, are obviously more closely tied to the jurisdictional church. But even among them the church is becoming movement. It has happened that the bishops present at a liturgical conference of priests announced with a generous smile that the fathers were dispensed from saying their breviary during the conference; here the bishops still believed the ecclesiastical government had the power to determine what priests will pray, while in fact 90 percent of the priests present had made up their minds a long time ago what they were going to pray during these days. Some have suggested that the situation reminds them of the stationmaster who, as the train is already starting to move, rushes out of his office to raise the signal of departure to the driver: it makes the stationmaster feel better.

In the present situation vast numbers of priests and nuns feel that the institutions they have inherited no longer express their Christian self-understanding. In dialogue with their fellow-Christians the gospel has acquired a new meaning for them, yet the structures to which they belong still perpetuate the older ideal. Many of them are leaving. Many of them feel free to leave their institutions even without the proper permission and yet continue actively to participate in the church's life. This is another instance of the breakdown of jurisdictional authority. We may conclude that in actual fact the transition from society to movement has begun in the Catholic church.

What, then, is the role of authority in the church that is becoming movement? Jurisdiction will be replaced by a charismatic form of authority. The men in authority, having received a share of apostolic power through ordination, will regard themselves as coordinators in the community, be in touch with all the sections of the Christian movement, and in dialogue with the community spell out the deep convictions the Spirit is creating among the people. The men in authority will be able to put into words what the people deeply involved in the movement have come to believe. In other words, the specific, authoritative role of the ministry—pope and bishops—will be magisterium.

The word magisterium has acquired an ambiguous meaning today. Over many centuries the Catholic hierarchy has regarded the magisterium as part of their jurisdictional power and hence have affirmed doctrinal positions with the same frequency and the same ease as they made laws. Magisterium was understood in accordance with a legal model. This misunderstanding of the church's teaching authority has led to an over-extension of the magisterium. Popes and bishops have overreached themselves in their teaching. They have spoken with certainty on many matters about which no certainty was available. Today the vast body of official teaching is being questioned in many areas, whether it be the interpretation of scripture, the understanding of councils, the role of the papacy in the church, or the norms of moral life. Since so many official positions have been transcended or corrected by recent developments, it is the special task of the magisterium today to withdraw from fields where in the past it had claimed competence. If the magisterium wants to reaffirm its authoritative role in the

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church, it must first learn to step back from the exaggerated claims, even if this causes confusion among many people.

The gospel revealed in Jesus Christ needs periodic reinterpretation. We cannot be faithful to this gospel simply by repeating the formulas of the bible or the ecclesiastical tradition. Because men's questions change in every age and the demonic takes on new forms, the central thrust and message of the selfsame gospel must also change. Unless the gospel is refocused in a new age, we cannot proclaim it in fidelity to the original gift. This refocusing takes place through Christian experience, through a new listening to God's word, through reading the scriptures and engaging in dialogue with new questions in mind, through a process involving Christians committed to wrestling with the evil of their culture, . . . but ultimately,—this is my position—it is the task of the collegial magisterium to spell out the core meaning of the gospel for the age. This is an exercise of charismatic authority. For this presupposes that pope and bishops are in touch with the various parts of the Catholic church, represent in dialogue and possibly in conflict the various convictions of the people, and eventually seek to spell out the central conviction emerging in the church regarding the core meaning of the gospel. The unity and the universality of the movement depends on this exercise of authority.

It is my view that without such an authority the church gets inevitably hung up on past teaching, biblical or ecclesiastical. To reinterpret past teaching and to proclaim the gospel with new meaning we require not only new Christian experience and theologians who interpret this new experience in doctrinal terms but also an authoritative voice which frees the church from the past and spells out in a language to be heard by all the call and meaning of Jesus Christ in the contemporary age. For some people "infallibility" suggests the immutability of doctrine: what we taught in the past will be true always. It would seem more proper, however, to regard "infallibility" as a symbol of the mutability of doctrine. Because the church believes that God continues to speak to it in his self-identical Word, it trusts that it is able to reinterpret the gospel once-for-all delivered as the Good News for the contemporary world. Infallibility, therefore, means freedom from the documents of the past and power to conserve the message by reassessing it in the new situation. The collegial authority makes it possible for vast numbers of people to enter into the new meaning of the gospel in unison.

This, I think, is the uniqueness of the Catholic church and this determines her special role in the universal Christian church in which and with which it is becoming a movement. For this reason I think it is better for discouraged Catholics to hang loose rather than to leave. There is enormous power in the authoritative collegial system we have inherited which, after the death of one or several important people, may become an important factor in the creation of a unified Christian movement and thus a major force in the transformation and humanization of the world.

DANIEL CALLAHAN

CHOKING ON PIOUS GOODIES

Gregory Baum's article has, inadvertently, helped me to see why the new theology—circa 1969—is as unsatisfactory and as unsatisfying as the old. The old theology was strong on well-defined boundaries, careful definitions, the paraphernalia of logical discriminations and discriminating logic; the new is strong on hope, movement, spirit, fluidity and openness. What the old wasn't, the new is; and vice-versa. The drawback of the old, once you cut through its apparatus, turned out to be of some consequence—most of it was just plain wrong or false. The main complaint directed at the old theology was its scholastic style, its hair-splitting, its legalism. That is actually a side issue; its real fault was that most of it was a pious fraud.

Gregory Baum's article might serve as a reminder that what counts in the end is not really method or style but truth. The old theology dazzled us into thinking we had to be in the precincts of truth just because the method was so dazzling. Gregory Baum's method is no less dazzling. Who's against being open-ended? And who wouldn't prefer an exciting movement to a dead society? If it won't yet pass muster at your local Knights of Columbus chapter, it will gain you a quick admission at your friendly neighborhood sensitivity training center.

I wouldn't react this way but for the smooth, essentially pietistic language of Father Baum's description of "the new perspective" in ecclesiology. It takes a powerful act of faith to swallow it all without choking—for it is just as possible to choke on a mouthful of sweets and fresh, fresh goodies (e.g., "embracing mankind") as on a clump of dry scholastic bones. The problem in both cases is the lack of genuine nourishment, modestly prepared.

I take it, for instance, that the "divine mystery" mentioned by Father Baum is important. But he never tells us what it is, nor even tries; it simply floats as an expression, unmoored and wafted about by general uplift currents. We are told that "Christians in all the churches have begun to experience the call and the meaning of Jesus Christ in a new way. . ." Well, maybe so, but I would like to know just where. There's plenty going on but that does not prove the point. We are supposed to be undergoing a "contemporary experience of the gospel." Just how he could know this, anymore than an earlier generation could know that all those propositions in the Baltimore Catechism were true, utterly escapes me.

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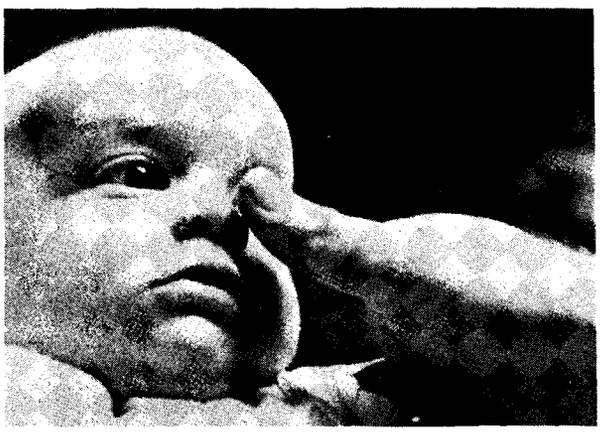
Of course, Father Baum's is a short article; he couldn't deal with everything. But it seems noteworthy that at every point where one wants to press beyond the nice talk about the human, and reconciliation, and redemptive transformations of society, and ask some pointed questions, a pious phrase is left to do the job.

But that is just, I believe, what we need to get away from. If this is the best that the new ecclesiology has to offer, then we are all dead, however much the talk and the rushing about may go on. I'm willing to listen to testimony that there are people out there who put some stock in this kind of theology—but I would also want to ask them at three in the morning, after a few drinks, "do you *really* believe that or is that just the way you talk?" A tough test—though a very old, traditional Catholic test—but one which accomplishes a bit of truth-telling on occasion.

I wish I could believe in "the new perspective." But it comes across as just a new placebo, good enough for "hanging loose" and passing theological time. It will satisfy no deep hungers.



The liturgy of the future will come from groups that understand themselves to be in conflict with the thought and practice of the bulk of American religion.

LITURGY THE PUBLIC HOPE

RICHARD NEUHAUS

"Seek simplicity and distrust it." Alfred North Whitehead's counsel to those who write history applies with double force to those who try to anticipate history. At first it may seem that "liturgy" is a manageably small slice of reality, something you can grab hold of and about which you can make reasonably safe predictions. Not long ago Christians viewed liturgy as a secure linchpin in a changing world. But, like it or not, that's all over now. There are no resting points, certainly there are no arrival points, in liturgical renewal.

Liturgy, the life of the church, the Christian consciousness, the public consciousness—these four factors are inseparably bound, or they should be. Each shapes itself in interaction with the others. If any one is isolated from the others it becomes perverse and sterile, incapable of contributing to our anticipating and celebrating the Year 2000 and beyond. Liturgy, then, is not "a thing unto itself" but the cultic dimension of our always incomplete search for personal meaning and social destiny, the ritual and ceremony by which the values of the search are sustained. Talk about liturgy in the Year 2000 is talk about the human condition at the dawn of another millennium.

The "liturgy" that concerns us here is an activity that is in identifiable continuity with the history of Christian cultus. At the very least, this means *ritual gatherings in explicit relationship to Jesus the Christ*. Anything lacking this minimal continuity may be humanizing and praiseworthy, but it is something other than Christian liturgy. Christian liturgy is a lived action in "intentionality which is stretched toward the future, giving shape to history by reconstituting a given identity" (Gibson Winter, *Elements for a Social Ethic*). To project means, literally, to throw the present into the future. We cannot look into the future, we can only project and then live in anticipation that our projection is accurate. The problem, of course, is that we may be throwing the wrong pieces of the present into the future.

Among progressive souls it is assumed that present liturgical experimentation is a sign of the liturgy of tomorrow. Perhaps of tomorrow, but not, I think, of three decades from now. The emphases on sensitivity experiences drawn from group dynamics, on spontaneity, on celebration of values shared by small homogeneous groups, on appropriating the musical and life styles of the youth culture—all this may well be a distraction from, rather than an anticipation of, the liturgy of the Year 2000. There is no evolutionary inevitability which assures that present liturgical experiment is the vanguard of future celebration.

Equally distracting is the fanciful game of "liturgical kaleidoscope" that is popular in some circles. As a kaleidoscope has many pieces which can be juggled almost endlessly to create myriad configurations, so one can play with the pieces—logical, acoustic, visual and kinetic—of liturgy to produce new forms, both attractive and bizarre. Some interesting recent results include masses on the moon, rites of rebirth for people receiving brain transplants, memorial observances for those killed in the presumably impending revolution, and rites for the Parliament of Mankind in the coming world government.

God knows we need creative fantasy, and the game

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should not be knocked too severely. But "liturgical kaleidoscope" is not the key to the liturgy of the Year 2000. The future that claims our attention is focused on the behavior of Christian people who, for the most part, possess their own brains and are decidedly earth-bound nonrevolutionists. One liturgical journal recently proposed blueprints for a chapel on the moon. The subject is not without interest, but my prejudice inclines me to greater concern for what will be happening at Transfiguration Church, corner of Hooper and Marcy in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, on a hot summer day in 2002.

The assumption is that, barring global destruction, Transfiguration Church or something quite like it will be there in 2002. Since this assumption is crucial to talk about the liturgy of the future, and since it is challenged by many thoughtful people, a word of explanation is required. While the pace of change may indeed make ours the "age of discontinuity," we should not succumb to the tyranny of the present and the imperiousness of what is conceived to be imminent. Of course we must reject that Rock of Ages mentality which argues that the church has weathered other storms—the fall of the empire, the end of feudalism, 16th century divisions, the Enlightenment, industrialization, etc.—and will therefore come through strong from the next three decades. The "weatherings" of the past have been more a matter of finding shelter from the elements of change, and today there is no place to go, except into enclaves of diminishing size and with a self-destructing future. Embracing the prevailing styles of the present and their projections into the future is not, however, the only alternative to the Rock of Ages mentality. Liturgical renewal that engages the church in "affirming and celebrating" ("adjusting to") the way things are in the culture is a sure way for the church to miss out on the way things will be.

Pre-Christian or Post-Christian?

There is the radical possibility, for instance, that we are living in a pre-Christian rather than a post-Christian culture. That is, in contradiction to the apparently inexorable tide of secularity, our culture may become increasingly more amenable to the sensibilities and practices of the biblical religious tradition. In this case, significant liturgy is not so much reflective as it is anticipatory of the way in which our society might "reconstitute its identity."

The pervasive malaise in American life now is a kind of identity drift caused by our being humanly overwhelmed by forces of social and technological change. A society will not accept endless drift. Movements and institutions assert themselves to define the situation, to reconstitute the identity or establish a new one. This is more specifically the role of value-bearing groups or institutions. Institutions instrumental in "reconstituting identity" are not created *ex nihilo,* but are asserted from existing trends and tensions. The intelligentsia, including literature, the arts and the university have historically played a role in defining social reality. New political movements with a compelling ideology may emerge from the present revolutionary consciousness in American life. Institutions and movements of religion are also candidates for the task of reconstituting cultural identity. Our work for the liturgy of the future should be informed by this possibility.

Most liturgical renewal now seems indifferent to this cultural task of the church. Liturgical change is either of the official variety, which is largely a matter of internal ecclesial politics, or of the self-consciously avant-garde variety aimed at small-group experimentation. The former is an uninteresting exercise which assumes that church authorities can continue to prescribe what is proper and orthodox and permitted in liturgical action. The problem of eucharistic communion across denominational lines, for instance, is only a problem in meetings of an "official" ecumenical character. Now, and increasingly in the years ahead, Christians who meet in communities of concern recognize that there is no connection between eucharistic fellowship and church-institutional affiliation. The notion that church authorities can permit or prohibit the use of this canon or another will become increasingly ludicrous in the popular mind as it is already in the minds of those engaged in liturgical experiment. This does not mean that chaos will prevail as every local group does its own thing liturgically. It does mean that sanctions and recommendations will be considered on their merits. It does mean that it will be more generally recognized that the real differences in the American Christian community have little to do with denominational lines, and that the holding of office does not qualify anyone to exercise authority in the church. So long as official liturgical renewal is unresponsive to these factors, it will be less and less in touch with the liturgical change that is shaping the cultus of the future.

The second style of renewal, the self-consciously avant-garde aimed at small-group experiment, may be equally out of touch. The underlying assumption of much of this experiment is that the institutional church has failed or is fast failing. It can therefore be dismissed as a significant factor by those who search for the future. In terms of supporting and provoking the more radical elements of the Christian tradition, the churches of America have indeed failed miserably. But in terms of maintaining itself as a major institutional force in society, American religion can hardly be counted out in our thinking about the next thirty years.

The liturgical experimentation that anticipates the future is aimed more at culture formation than at the privatized search for "meaning" in small groups. It is more concerned to reshape the religious understanding of the mass of church membership than to turn on the enlightened ones who have come out from the Babylon

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of institutional religion. The liturgy that will play a part in defining social reality will be more politicized than psychologized. That is, unlike many small-group celebrations, it will be less geared to providing "meaningful experiences" and more to articulating the hope for a new social order.

Radical creativity is by definition in severe tension to the prevailing order. The liturgy of the future, if it develops along the lines suggested here, will come from groups that understand themselves to be in conflict with the thought and practice of the bulk of American religion. Yet this tension and conflict will be *for* rather than *against* the institutions of religion. Except for those small groups which constitute themselves in a sectarian fashion

as new churches, radical experimentation will assume the continued strength of organized religion in American life. And well we should, for it is not conservative bias but candor that compels our recognizing that the Christian church in its various forms, with the liturgy in its various forms, is the most enduring organizational reality in the history of mankind. Durability in the past constitutes, of course, no solid claim on the future. However, since the past is the only and fragile resource for anticipating the future, the durability of the church is more relevant than we may suspect, or even than we may wish.

How we think of liturgy in the Year 2000, and consequently the kind of liturgical experiment that captures our enthusiasm now, depends on what we suppose the church will be in the year 2000. Much is made of the fact that church attendance is declining, and indeed from the 1955 high of 49% of American adults attending church in an average week it has declined to 43% in 1968. Ecclesiastical Paul Reveres would do well to restrain themselves, however. The past eighteen years do not indicate the imminent demise of the church in America. (Why rising numbers believe religion is losing its influence is a quite different subject.) In 1940, 37% of American adults attended church in the average week, and less reliable information about the 1920's puts the figure under 30%. At the beginning of the 19th century it is estimated that the comparable figure was no more than 14%. Some argue that the significance is not just in the numbers but in the *types* of people who are staying away from the church, namely those who will be most influential in shaping the future. Those who make this argument must contend with the fact that church attendance is slightly higher among blacks than among whites, significantly higher among college students, and dramatically higher among the college-educated.

My purpose in writing is not to give comfort to conservatives and certainly not to applaud religion's hold on the American public, but simply to underscore that the church is massively and inescapably there, and not likely to go away soon. I suspect that Roman Catholics, who have in the past decade undergone the most dramatic changes and also the greatest decline at various levels of institutional participation, tend to reflect a skewed perception of what is happening religiously in America. Thus Roman Catholic liturgists who are designing rites for the remnant of the diaspora will probably find themselves quite irrelevant to what will be the church in the Year 2000. They will be comforted to discover, however, that they are in thoroughly ecumenical company, for the Protestant vision of the liturgical future also suffers from the dominance of psychology over politics, of small-group turn-ons over cultural transformation.

Until the last six or seven years, liturgical renewal in the Protestant churches was largely a matter of reappropriating the "liturgical heritage" that had been lost through the ravages of pietism, rationalism and revivalism. For Lutherans this meant restoring usages prescribed by the 16th century confessional documents; for Methodists it was returning to Anglican origins; for Baptists it was arguing for an elementary sense of history about the forms of worship. For all Protestants liturgical renewal meant a new emphasis on the centrality of the eucharist and on the sacramental character of Christian life. The critics of liturgical renewal in Protestantism declared that the whole enterprise smacked of Romanism or Anglo-Catholicism.

After Vatican II, many liturgically concerned Protestants expressed astonishment at finding Roman Catholics on the liturgical renewal road, but the Catholics seemed to be going in the opposite direction. Roman Catholics were throwing off what they thought to be an oppressive sacramentalism and concern for forms, and were emphasizing the personal, affective elements of worship. Nevertheless, several factors led Protestants to sign up with the Roman Catholic version of liturgical renewal.

Among Roman Catholic progressives there was a much more widespread enthusiasm for their brand of liturgical renewal than there was among Protestant progressives for theirs. Since, on the other hand, almost all progressive Protestants were enthusiastic about ecumenism, the liturgical movements in Protestantism gained acceptability by identifying with the renewal in Catholic circles. While some Roman Catholic immobilists muttered about "Protestantizing" the liturgy, Protestant liturgists got off the hook of appearing to sell out to Rome. After all, they were only joining up with those Roman Catholics who were "coming our way." Another reason

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why the Roman Catholic version of renewal won out is that "restoring the liturgical heritage" somehow seemed regressive and dull compared with the "new" things being done in Roman Catholic circles.

Common Problem

If today's liturgical experimentation is a poor harbinger of liturgy in the Year 2000, it poses a problem for all the American churches. Liturgists such as Robert Ledogar and Aidan Kavanaugh have recently called for the establishment of centers for serious liturgical research and experiment. They insist that the lack of a disciplined seriousness about liturgy as such has resulted in our having few guidelines for shaping alternative liturgical expression for the future. The point is that much of the experimenting that is going on is not reflective, critical or being shared with others. Having agreed that liturgy should not be determined by authoritarian law and precedent, what are the human dynamics and political implications of the Gospel which should inform and shape the church's worship? What is happening now is not very helpful in answering this question because much of what is called liturgical experimentation is only secondarily, perhaps incidentally, related to liturgy.

Especially in Roman Catholic circles, the forces for change gravitated to the liturgical renewal. Whereas in Protestantism liturgical movements seemed to deal with the archaic and arcane, the Roman Catholic movement represented the vanguard. In part this was because liturgists such as Father Virgil Michel rightly emphasized the social dimension of Christian *leiturgia*. But to a large extent the liturgical renewal became the focus of change because of default. The Modernist controversy squelched daring intellectual experiment, the immigrant insecurity of American Catholics discouraged aggressive organization for social change, and direct challenge to ecclesiastical authority was simply unthinkable. The result was that social activists, intellectuals and those eager for organizational reform of the church all marched under the banner of the liturgical movement. Liturgy became the battering ram for change.

Today this strange coalition is better understood, and this is a hopeful sign. Roman Catholic intellectuals have clearly moved out from under the cover of liturgical renewal. To this separated but sympathetic writer, it seems the change was popularly signaled by Daniel Callahan's "Putting Liturgy in its Place" (*NCR*, August 9, 1967). Callahan said in effect: We can go ahead and do what we must do as Catholics and intellectuals without so close a tie to the liturgical renewal. He added, rather gracelessly perhaps: The whole liturgy bit was never what it was cracked up to be in any case.

Similarly, the social activists and church reformers are out from cover. Direct confrontations with the hierarchy on a score of issues are multiplying, and the last few years have seen a flowering of Catholic social activism that has thrown off its devout liturgical wrappings. The intellectuals, reformers and political activists are clearly not indifferent to liturgy. To the contrary, this is where most of the experimenting is done with new forms of prayer and eucharistic celebration. But now that the old coalition called the liturgical movement is not strategically necessary, is there still a liturgical movement composed of people primarily concerned about developing the cult appropriate to celebrating the world of the Year 2000?

According to their critics at least, the liturgists have tended to join up where the action had moved to. The theme of last year's Liturgical Week in Washington was "Revolution: Christian Responses." It was exciting and undoubtedly relevant but, many people asked, what do speeches by Herbert Aptheker, Floyd McKissick and Andrew Young have to do with liturgy? "Everything!" the sponsoring Liturgical Conference ebulliently responded. "Liturgy is life!" No doubt. But something that is everything is for all practical purposes nothing. "Everything" gets along by itself. The critics are not necessarily opposed to the political orientation of the Liturgical Conference. They do wonder who is tending to the business of liturgy while groups like the Liturgical Conference are off doing their political thing. Some critics have, of course, such a restricted notion of liturgy that they would have groups like the Liturgical Conference limit themselves to vestment designing and rubric polishing. The criticism has also, however, touched on a basic problem for the future of liturgical renewal. I believe changes are already evident.

Liturgical groups in Roman Catholic and Protestant circles are now more aware of their special role. It is not enough to attach the liturgical movement to whatever is moving on the liberal-radical market at the moment. There is a specifiable part of human behavior known as liturgy and no apology is necessary for taking it seriously True, liturgy is inseparable from the whole of life in church and larger society. But liturgy is not everything and everything is not liturgy.

Beginning with this recognition, liturgical renewal sharpens the focus of its concern and the questions it asks. Psychologists, social scientists, theologians and political analysts are called in. Does the metaphor of the meal still have impact in contemporary life? What are the political models symbolically represented in liturgical action, what notions of human community are evoked? On what levels should liturgy challenge, and what ways should it legitimately comfort its participants? How is it possible, or is it possible, for the same cultic act to underscore continuity with the past and to provoke radical openness to the future?

The list of questions is long and difficult. The most creative elements in the liturgical renewal are getting to work on this agenda. Some are still restoring the lost

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heritage, others are still fighting the battles of ecclesiastical authoritarianism, yet others are still demonstrating how relevant liturgy is. But it is from the renewed search for understanding the cultic dimension of man and his communities that we can expect a clearer idea of liturgy for the year 2000.

II

In the Year 2000 we may be doing liturgy designed for the Year 1400, as most Christians, at least those in the "liturgical traditions," are doing today. What we will be doing thirty years from now depends in part, as I have suggested, on the degree of disciplined seriousness given liturgical experiment and research. But more than what the liturgists devise, the future of religion in America will determine the shape of the liturgy. There are at least four projected postures of the church over against the larger society: 1) an enclave of true believers; 2) a marginal elite; 3) a culturally ineffective mixed minority; 4) civil religion's avant garde.

In *The Sacred Canopy*, Peter Berger suggests that the collapse of plausibility for the church's teachings and the inexorable course of secularization will force the churches into entrenched minorities, or enclaves, of true believers. His projection receives strong empirical support from the widely discussed studies of Jeffrey Hadden and Charles Glock. Berger is not talking about the currently popular notion of a diaspora or remnant church. The enclaves he has in mind will be essentially conservative, characterized more by the mind-set of Dallas, Texas, with its fundamentalist Christian anti-Communism, than by the searchers for truth in today's experimental communities. Where the enclave mentality dominates there is no room for experiment in liturgy. Each group reinforces the practices which accentuate its own history and distinguishes it from the hostile society; Baptists insist on the rituals of revivalism, Lutherans glory in the sacred irrelevance of the 16th century confessions, and Roman Catholics exult in the obedience exacted for the performance of rites of rubrical precision. To the degree that the enclave hypothesis is correct, one can simply project the more reactionary factors in the present religious situation and he will have a fair approximation of the church and its liturgy in the Year 2000.

The second model of the church's future, the marginal elite, suggests a very different story. Here the nucleus is formed by the experimenters, the searchers for truth, the self-consciously liberated. Critics of these emphatically innovationist groups score their apparent faddishness, but the greater wisdom is with those who are friendly to novelty in a novel environment. The more important criticism asks whether this direction of liturgical experiment accurately anticipates the future of American religion. These small groups are composed primarily of people formerly active in more conventional church institutions. Many Roman Catholics in "underground" groups doubt that all this will have much meaning for their children, who will not find it necessary to struggle for liberation from the oppressive Catholicism of their parents' experience. It does not seem that this constituency can or should "reconstitute its identity" in another generation. The selective or elitist character of these groups is also ideological. In *There is No Place Like People*, a recent publication of the Liturgical Conference, all the suggestions for small group celebrations are marked by themes which, on the American political spectrum, are associated with liberal-radical commitments. The narrow base of recruitment and appeal raises inescapable questions about the staying power of these groups.

Two contingencies might change this picture. First, if the current high of religious interest in the youth culture is sustained, and if Andrew Greeley and others are correct in predicting that these occult and sometimes bizarre religious movements will lead youth into (back to?) the organized churches, then the small-group experiments will be the logical ports of entry. The other contingency is an overt political repression that brutally quenches critical religious witness. In that case, the small liturgical communities (with considerable membership reshuffling) might become something similar to the "Confessing Church" of the Nazi era.

The third, and I believe most probable, model of the future church is that of the culturally ineffective mixed minority. It will include a wide spectrum politically, economically and intellectually. Room will be made for diverse doctrinal and liturgical expression, the chief distinction among members falling along what Charles Glock calls the comfort-challenge line (the difference between those who value religion primarily for its comforting and affirming dynamics, and those who want the religious community to be a change agent). This mixture will be a minority smaller than the minority of the religiously committed is now. The decrease will result, at least in part, from the loss of plausibility for conventional belief-systems which, as has been demonstrated, results in lower participation in religious organizations.

No amount of liturgical innovation will compensate for the loss of plausibility. Liturgical changes to date, from the most imaginatively experimental to the new missal approved by the Vatican, do not represent a serious theological reconstruction. Some notoriously offensive elements are omitted and there is an obvious accenting of more "pristine" themes from biblical theology, but there is no restatement of Christian truth claims in a manner shaped by post-Enlightenment rationality. The nature-grace gap has not been closed, divine action still moves up and down, faith is still depended upon as a backstop for reason. The thrust of liturgical change has been toward what is "meaningful" in terms of effective dynamics such as "creating a sense of community," "helping us to see and celebrate the beauty of creation,"

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"making us more sensitive to the feelings of others," etc. If the community's teachings lack plausibility, however, most people will find their effective needs satisfied elsewhere or, like the great majority of men, remain emotionally undernourished.

The fourth and I believe most hopeful model is that of the Christian community as civil religion's avant garde. It is not the most likely. This model means Christianity moves out of the limited sphere of subjectivity where one engages in religion for the sake of a full-orbed emotive life, and enters the arena of public discourse as the most rationally persuasive view of reality. The lack of public credibility is perhaps the major obstacle to a resurgence of the Christian worldview as the pervasive context for the thinking of western man. I am enthusiastic about liturgical experiment and the church's engagement in radical social change, but the future of Christianity finally depends more on the work of men such as Wolfhart Pannenberg, Karl Rahner and Johannes Metz who are reconstructing theology as a science of reason able to provide a frame of reference for understanding man and his hope. In the light of this reconstruction, liturgical renewal should give more attention to the *what*, as well as to the *how*, of Christian communication and celebration.

In this fourth and hoped-for model, liturgy in the Year 2000 will be done by some but for all. That is, the Christian celebration will symbolize and provoke the public hope. All this is possible, for American society's present intellectual malaise, this drift we have called liberalism, is not permanent. There is now a sense of impending change; one hopes the sense is not illusory and that the malaise will not be terminated by a spastic resort to a new fascism. But it is clear that the secular city with its pragmatic realism, its short-range approach to problem-solving, its value-free analyses, its evasion of the larger questions of the human condition and destiny, is no longer adequate. It is regrettable that some Christians have discovered the secular city just in time to witness its death throes. The liturgy that has a claim upon the future will anticipate the New Jerusalem which is both City of God and City of man. Such a liturgy will celebrate, and call for commitment to, the present signs, the new politics, of the City whose fulfillment may be many millennia beyond the Year 2000.

It will be Christian liturgy, in continuity with "ritual gatherings in explicit relationship to Jesus the Christ." It will, however, be more anticipation than memorial, focused on public hope more than on private meaning; it will be designed to provoke decision more than sensation, and, while providing small-group experience, will aim at articulating the society's direction. The liturgical community, which is the church, will be independent of the political structure but will provide the metaphors by which the people determine political purpose. The liturgy itself will still include bread and wine, or reasonable facsimiles, if there are any; it will have a meal-banquet character and will no doubt utilize electronic media and other technology as yet unknown. We can now fiddle freely with the liturgical kaleidoscope and still not exhaust the combinations that will be used in developing liturgy over the next three decades. No experiment is too far out in our search for a liturgy fit for a church that is no longer enclave but vanguard of civil religion's hope.

Finally, I know that what I have written violates the prevailing consensus that ours is and increasingly will be a secular, radically pluralistic, non-ideological, post-Christian society. It is also unfair to titillate, or perhaps just irritate, without addressing all the questions raised by what some will consider a very unlikely projection of religion's future in the modern world. Nevertheless, I hope some readers will be radical enough to entertain and explore the possibility suggested. And of course, as Professor Whitehead said, distrust it.

ROBERT HOVDA

PROPHETS ARE MADE, NOT BORN

Sensitive critics are too previous to spurn and a bit too nettlesome to embrace, so I stand respectfully but with some hesitation before Richard Neuhaus' bright and bristly piece on liturgy in the church of 2000 A.D. As a frank partisan in many of the current ecclesial struggles, I confess to feeling some resentment at his arch "a plague on both your houses" tone.

The ecclesiology of the Christian church—i.e., a church of sinners, an open church, a church conceiving itself as a sign pointing to the kingdom rather than as the kingdom—is inevitably a mixed bag. It offers few of the comforts of clean distinctions, clear categories, neatly cleft schools of thought or practice. Its fleshly reality simply doesn't yield to "four projected postures of the church over against the larger society."

This is not to say that Neuhaus' postures or projections are useless. The church as "civil religion's avant garde," with all the semantic clarification that phrase requires, is a most useful and even necessary model for our hopes, our efforts and our current catechesis. We need an aim, and this is the proper aim of a prophetic and this-worldly movement whose liturgy celebrates a "kingdom" in constant tension with the status quo, whose transcendent-yet-immanent reference is a license for a permanent dissatisfaction with what is.

But this dissatisfaction always has for its object what the church is as well as what the rest of society is. Short of the ultimate kingdom, the church will never be purely the avant garde it nourishes and sustains. Nor is the "mixed minority" which it has always been in relation to the human race necessarily "culturally ineffective."

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The church's sign value may be and has been obscured by the overgrowth of centuries—for example, centuries of attempts by the West and by the white man to domesticate the gospel. Yet who is bold enough to say that this admittedly obscure sign has been culturally ineffective in our history or is so in this present time? The institution's light is too much shaded and its rays are too often deflected by the overgrowth, but it does break through at times and with no slight effect on the senses.

It is this mixed bag, this mixed minority (including an avant garde that remains in some fashion with the institution because it sees the institution's necessity), that realizes and rejuvenates itself in liturgical celebration. For the community of faith to celebrate the Christ-event, its vision of the kingdom, its hope, as gift of God drawing us on in a purposeful direction and commissioning us to act—this is an utterly central and basic function of that community. It is not a matter of strategy or calculation—this liturgy—but something the community of faith finds necessary for its life.

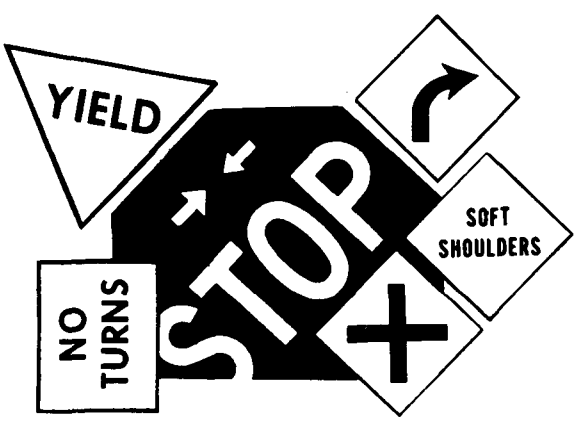
And in this celebration, "meaningful experiences" are of the essence. Neuhaus creates a strange dichotomy here. He seems to oppose liturgical experimentation's search for meaning and for emotional experience (indiscriminately labeled as "self-conscious," "privatized," etc.) to a liturgy geared to "articulating the hope for a new social order." I simply do not understand how you can have one without the other, or, at least, the latter without the former. Prophets are made, not born. And one need not be anti-intellectual to suspect that they are made not so much by reading Pannenberg and Rahner and Metz as by meaningful experiences of the celebration of God's word.

It did not take long for experimental communities and small groups meeting regularly for liturgical celebration to recognize their vulnerability to temptations of self-centeredness. Most of them, in my experience, have successfully weathered that crisis and are far more bent on "culture formation" than are traditional parish communities.

I know of no area of ecumenical discourse in which some participants have been so insensitive to certain real problems (for other participants) as in the area concerning the relationship between the concrete eucharist and concrete church institutions. When Neuhaus says "there is no connection between eucharistic fellowship and church-institutional affiliation," he simply dismisses a large and, I think, significant strand of Christian thought (especially but not exclusively Orthodox and Roman) about the church, about the eucharist and about the ministry. I mean a strand concerned more with incarnational universality and collegial structure than with questions of "purity of doctrine" or "validity." A church of the future which avoids the problems of the deep interrelation between these elements of Christianity is not thereby enriched.

Nevertheless I agree with much of Neuhaus' thrust in the article and look forward to the dialogue and progress it stimulates.

Traditional moral theology will no longer be in demand. Its practitioners will undoubtedly have found other employment.



EXIT FOR ETHICISTS

JOHN G. MILHAVEN

The man who fondly consents to forecast the state of etchics in the church in the year 2000 would not seem to have to look far for the plank to walk. The procedure for making a fool of himself appears simple. He needs only take up ethical questions one by one and conjecture concerning each the position of the Church thirty years from now. The questions would be the familiar ones concerning war and weaponry, abortion, euthanasia, sexual behavior, etc., as well as new ones looming now for the first time, such as those concerning organic transplantation and genetic manipulation.

However, as everyone knows, a revolution is presently sweeping through Christian ethics (or moral theology; I take the terms as synonymous), and is in the process of transforming its nature both as ethics and as Christian. Men are starting to propose, not so much new answers to old ethical questions, as new kinds of ethical questions. Those whose ethical inquiry has a Christian dimension are starting to mean something different when asking, "What does the church hold?" A less airy and baseless procedure of prediction would be, rather than focusing on individual questions one by one, to try to elucidate these two new general developments and extrapolate them to the year 2000, introducing particular moral questions by way of illustration. In this paper, I will try to do it principally for the first development, the

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transformation of Christian ethics as *ethics*, since another paper is dealing with the development of the church as church.

The new ethics that will have evolved by 2000 should still be continuous with its past. It should still be the human attempt to answer the question, "What ought I to do?" Men will still recognize that there are things they "have to do," whether they like it or not, things that are "obligatory." If they do not do them, they will have failed, have missed the mark, be guilty, be ashamed. It is when a man, in a given situation, is not sure what the necessary actions are, that he raises the ethical question, "What ought I to do?" Thus Moses concerning his people, Socrates concerning the hemlock, Kierkegaard concerning Regina. Bonhoeffer concerning Hitler. Thus Christians in 1969 and 2000.

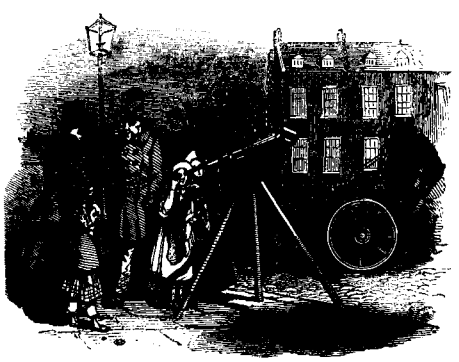
What is beginning in our day and will presumably reach completion by 2000 is that men—not for the first time in history—while continuing to raise the question concerning their ought's, are altering its more specific meaning. For centuries, when a Christian has asked what he ought to do in a given situation, he meant, "What does the law say?" He might be thinking of natural law of either Catholic or Protestant variety or of the prescriptions of the Bible or of "what the church says." It is public knowledge, respectively lamented and cheered, that the number of Christians posing the ethical question in this sense is presently decreasing and will, one could presume, be minimal in 2000.

Without claiming unusual foresight or expecting to surprise anyone, one would already draw one conclusion about 2000: the traditional moral theology, that solved cases of conscience through application of law, will no longer be in demand. Its practitioners will have undoubtedly found other employment. As will be discussed subsequently, Christians will still recognize the moral relevance of principles, but not as solely decisive factors. There will no longer be a role for the specialist who, given a few key details of the case, e.g., of a medical operation or a type of sexual behavior, can announce certain things that should or should not be done.

There is no point in discussing here, for the nth time in our day, whether ethical thinking, in shedding the concept of obligation determined by absolute laws, is progressing or regressing. More fruitful and revelatory of the future would be to bring into focus the incoming understanding of "obligation" and "ought," frequently and aptly labeled the obligation of "responsibility." The question, "What ought I to do?" is coming to mean, "What is a responsible thing for me to do in this situation?"

The word "responsibility" is so much in vogue that it is being used with a multiplicity of meanings. Proponents of older ethics have seized on it to stand for traditional moral concepts. However, the use of the term in any moral sense is recent. To use it for the new concept of obligation, one does not have to try to communicate a new meaning with a term having old associations, as contemporary ethicists have to do with "love" and "obedience to God." H. Richard Niebuhr, one of the first American ethicists to use the term, has ably defined "responsibility" in the new moral sense. "For the ethics of responsibility, the *fitting* action, the one that fits into a total interaction as response and as anticipation of further response, is alone conducive to the good and alone is right" (the italics are Niebuhr's; "fitting" is the operative adjective throughout the ethics). It is evident that the essential components of "responsibility" are not new to Western thought nor to Western ethics. What is new and portentous is that the concept now occupies the center of ethics. It, and it alone, determines the content of moral obligation. It, and it alone, characterizes the things men have to do, or else will have failed and be guilty.

The contrast of the old and new meaning of obligation appeared in two visits I received one morning while working on this paper. Both men had been referred to me as a "new moral theologian." They were married, middle-aged, educated in Catholic colleges, evidently of



intelligence and moral integrity. They both wanted to do something that the Catholic ethics they had learned had forbidden. They were asking whether it was now permitted. For one man, it was a vasectomy. For the other, masturbation. At the close of each visit, I realized I had not communicated with my visitor. We did not speak the same language. More literally, we were not asking the same question, even though we used the same words, "What ought he to do?"

What each of my visitors was asking was whether the action was forbidden by moral law. On learning there were grounds for thinking there was no clear and certain prohibition, his moral questioning was over. Mine began. To judge whether the operation or the masturbation could be a responsible act, a fitting response of the man, one had to assess the concrete circumstances to see whether the action could "fit into a total interaction as response and as anticipation of further response," e.g., how the desire to do the action arose from the life he shared with his wife and how it was likely to affect her and their future life directly and indirectly. Of course, a further reason for our inability to communicate was that

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with their query they were looking for the decisive solution given by the traditional moral theologian, whereas my kind of questioning precluded that I, an outsider, could give a definitive answer. Only they could weigh all the concrete factors to judge whether the action could make up a fitting response. All I could do was to start them along lines of reflection likely to lead to a well-grounded judgment.

If the two men are of a vanishing breed and the new concept of moral obligation determines the decisions of more and more Christians, the moral life of the Christian community in 2000 will be a strenuously active one. Not merely does the new norm channel the individual's sense of obligation into neglected areas (such as the experiential intimacy of husband and wife) while easing prohibitions in others (such as vasectomy and masturbation). It is, by its nature, an activistic norm, demanding positive action far more often than could obligation under law. In whatever situation one is in, one must respond. Usually, though not always, that means doing something: smiling or applauding or singing or kissing.

But, given the human condition, the action called for most often is of one kind. Key to most human situations are the needs of the persons involved. The fitting response is then well expressed by the final line of a scene in Bertholt Brecht's *Furcht und Elend des dritten Reiches*. A woman weeps uncontrolled over the death of both her sons in the Hitler-led war in Spain. Her husband pleads, "Don't cry, Maria. That doesn't help." She ceases to weep, stares at him silently for a moment, and cries out, "Then do something that helps!"

In the play, written for German-speaking people watching the growing dominance of the Nazis, Brecht brings the curtain down leaving the cry ringing in the ears of the audience. It is no accident that pioneers of the new ethics, such as Barth and Bonhoeffer and Thielicke, reared their ethical syntheses out of similar experience. Before the growing terror and misery of the Third Reich, they and their countrymen had asked, "What ought I to do?" The traditional moral laws gave little light, in fact often forbade what was necessary, e.g., the lying and deceit and disobedience needed in order to rescue Jews. Yet their conscience urged inexorably, "Do something that helps!"

The same cry echoes in the conscience of the Christian who shares today the new ethical feeling and thinking. It is his inner reaction to the needs of men and women of his time: the poor, the racially oppressed, those involved in the Vietnam war, those involved in broken marriages, those preparing new biological and chemical instruments of war, those offering meaningless liturgies, the mentally retarded—to select examples exclusively from wider social life. Do something that helps!

Some are responding by publicly and illegally protesting, destroying files, sitting in, shouting down, etc. The suavity with which Catholic intellectuals, like myself, discuss protest, balancing appropriately appreciation and criticism, can conceal its novelty as a widespread phenomenon in the moral life of the church. The instincts of the Catholics who snarled at the priests marching in support of the Catonsville nine were unerring. Something foreign, and therefore threatening, was invading Catholic life.

The novelty does not lie in the conscious violation of law. The old morality permitted the violation under certain conditions, just as the new morality condemns it under certain conditions. Nor can one explain the novelty by the psychological make-up of the individual protesters, sick sports of sick modern society. Both the old and new morality condemn rash judgment. Nor are the protesters to be distinguished from their critics by their greater moral energy. The new morality can agree with the old that studying to get into medical school has a genuine moral value and is, in the long run, more arduous than persistently occupying other people's offices.

But one thing that is new with the Catholic protester and distinguishes him from his Catholic critic is, I submit, his understanding of moral obligation. The protester feels it is up to him personally to do something about blacks in ghettos, soldiers and civilians in Vietnam, and future victims of chemical and biological warfare. The Catholic still thinking along traditional grooves may view with concern what is taking place, but does not see it as his obligation to try to do anything about it. Concerning the Vietnam war, one can think of exceptions, e.g., the majority of the men fighting in Vietnam. But they are exceptions, and in the case of the suffering of black Americans or of the future of biological and chemical warfare, rare is the critic of protest who feels obliged personally to do anything about it. He may be a moral man, trying to live by a demanding code, but it is not a code that includes obligations of this sort.

Conceivably, the new trend is an elite morality or an ethics proper only to intellectuals. Conceivably, the majority of any community, for reasons not necessarily discreditable, will always conceive moral obligation in legal terms. The premise of this paper would be false then, and the forecast totally invalid. But if one continues with the working hypothesis that the new trend will characterize the ethical thinking of the general Christian community, one still can ask whether the protester is typical of what will be the average morally concerned Catholic in 2000. The answer, I believe, is: in his moral imperative, yes; in his actions, no. Illegal protest is appropriate only for the small minority endeavoring to alter the moral judgment and conduct of the majority. It staggers the imagination to think what will be Christian life, individual and social, once the new thinking penetrates and re-forms the genuine moral sensitivity and energy of the Catholic mass and brings it to bear universally on the needs of members of the community.

It may sound too good to be true, and perhaps it is,

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for one reason or another. In any case, it does not follow that Christians will be any better than they are now. They will be what they always have been, sinners. They will need continually Christ's forgiveness and grace. There is no reason to think that their efforts to live morally will be greater than hitherto. But inasmuch as they do try to meet their basic moral obligations before Christ, they will have no choice but to go into action and respond to those in need. No more than the concept of responsibility, the idea of helping out is not new to Christian thought. The Christian who strove for the higher, more perfect Christian life strove to imitate Christ in his active care. But in 2000, it will no longer be a matter of counsel or a more perfect way or a secondary obligation, but the central duty of Christian life. It *is* hard to imagine what that will look like.

Creative Answers

Being, therefore, activistic, an ethics of responsibility demands a different kind of methodology than an ethics of obedience to law. To be obliged to a fitting response, normally in some form of positive action, is inevitably to be obliged to create a response. A creative methodology is required. "Creative" is an in word, and it is not in to be in. But creativity does aptly characterize an ethics of responsibility. One can see this more clearly envisioning concrete cases than by abstract analysis: I am trying to be a responsible father, to be a responsible teacher, responsibly to entertain the friend of a friend. Or more in particular: I discover that the woman I love is given to moods of anxiety; an acquaintance down the hall shows that he wants to become my friend; two of my employees begin to show increasing jealousy and mutual resentment. In each case, I spontaneously raise the question, "What ought I to do?" In each case, the answer, a fitting response to the persons in the situation, is clearly something that I will have to create, small decision after small decision, in the coming days and months. If I meet my moral obligation, I will inevitably create a history of responses that never existed before.

That the traditional moral theologian rarely, if ever, discussed the last five of the six cases signals already how radically the new ethical inquiry differs from the old. Just as characteristic and more substantial is the methodology that the creative kind of answer, looked for in each case by the ethical question, calls for. A further analysis of the creative response, with the above six paradigms kept in mind, can explicate this.

It is impossible to imagine that in any of the above cases I would find only one possible fitting response or series of responses. To start off, I would have to choose, almost arbitrarily, where I will look for possible fitting responses. I could start exploring the possibility of spending more time with my son, or of delegating to him some of my authority and responsibility in regard to the younger children, or of giving him more freedom, or of conversing with him in a new manner, etc., etc. One could well consider more than one area of possibilities, but rarely would a man feel obliged to explore all. Within the chosen area one rarely comes to the end of conceivable possibilities, e.g., ways of father and son spending time together. Moreover, none of the possibilities have ever been duplicated before. There has never been a man like me or a boy like him or the complex of concrete realities that make up our lives. Finally, in carrying out the response I decided on, I never find that it progresses as conceived. I have regularly to readjust my project, and even then the final outcome is always something of a surprise. When a man who has tried consistently to be a responsible father reflects at his son's marriage on the plans he had for his son at birth and over the intervening years, he will assuredly smile, with nevertheless a certain pride and satisfaction, at his ever changing resolutions and projects.

A traditional moralist could, I believe, understand that the ongoing responding of father to son was creative, and as a human being, he could recognize human drama and value in it. But as a moralist, he would find the "cases" uninteresting. He would find it hard to see how the planning and re-planning of the father had anything to do with the methodology of moral theology or ethics. The difficulty is understandable. The methodology of the old ethics was modeled on the science of lawyers and doctors. The methodology of the new is, as Jean-Paul Sartre suggested, best understood by analogy with the evaluative judgment of the artist, and, derivatively, the aesthete.

The work of art, like the responsible human act, is a creation. Nothing like it existed before. It proceeded from the vision of the artist; he saw, dimly at least, what he "had to" do. But he was not copying some pre-existing model nor simply applying general rules nor had he acquired his vision from another man's mind. Moreover, the vision itself, the original conception of the sculpture or novel or sonata, probably evolved and changed as the artist labored and took final form only at completion of the work. And yet the value and greatness of art is not subjective or relative. It can be objectively evaluated and criticized. The vision Picasso has as he takes up the brush is, in the real order, far superior to any I might have. His finished work is objectively great art, objectively surpassing the work of lesser painters. The judgment Picasso had of his project and the judgment he and other men have of his completed work are true, objective judgments, reflecting reality. So, too, can be the judgments of the new ethics.

But as the new method of ethical reflection becomes clear, it may make uneasy new as well as old moralists. After the new moralist fends off any application of absolute law to the case, what more can he say? What moral wisdom could Joseph Fletcher or I (I know he

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will pardon the pairing) write down that incipient fathers, launching on the ethical methodology described above, could read with profit? Could any general principles be of use to them? The planning will be, for each father, so personal, concrete, creative, unique, that no one, it would seem can make statements generally relevant to incipient fathers.

Here again, the analogy with aesthetic evaluation is useful. The free creativity of the artist finds its concrete reality only in a medium that has its own limiting constants. Certain results, and only they, can come from a given kind of musical instrument, stone, paint, human voice, etc. Nijinsky could pause only so long in flight. Only out of thorough knowledge of the medium can the creative vision arise. Human behavior and its constants are the medium in which ethical responsibility must create fitting responses. Though less regular and less easily detectable than those of stone and paint, the constants of human behavior determine the possibilities of creativity; the ethical judgment must take them into account. A married man would not need much experience to know that his excessive drinking is likely to create a history of unfitting responses between him and his wife. With some knowledge of psychology, he might be able to see that his drinking is his cowardly and effective resort to get back at his wife and that he and she are both dimly aware of it.

"How can" Questions

Since they more reliably and extensively bring to light constants of human behavior, the behavioral sciences, and any kind of professional or trained experience, will more and more give answers to the new kind of ethical question. The question looking for a fitting response in the situation always centers on a "How can . . ." question. How can we bring peace to these nations? Not: is this war unjust? How can we appropriately re-enact Jesus' last meal? Not: what are the pertinent rites and rubrics? How can we lessen anti-Semitism in this vacation resort? Not: may a hotel licitly refuse guests on the basis of race? How can this university senate work more effectively? Not: do students have a right to participate in administration? How can one create a healthy appreciation of sexuality in one's community? Not: what is pornography and should it be banned?

The "How can . . ." questions, demanding knowledge of the pertinent sciences and/or possession of the pertinent specialized experience (e.g., of the professional diplomat in regard to bringing about peace), move moral questions out of the competence of the general moralist, old or new. Ford and Kelly could field ably the old kind of question, concerning war, sexuality, medicine, alcoholism, truthtelling, etc. But what single man is professionally competent to answer the five "How can . . ." questions just above?

Richard Porter, president of the Catholic Economics Association, expressed shock at the decline, recorded by his poll, of encyclical courses in Catholic universities. The decline, I suggest, illustrates the shift in the nature of the ethical question and consequently in ethical methodology. In the economic sphere, the ethical task is no longer to establish and correlate the rights of individuals to private property, of the worker to a just wage, of everyone to material subsistence, of the individual vis-à-vis the state, of the state to care for the needy, etc. The ethical question now is: what measures can be taken to direct our economy so as to contribute to the greatest good of the citizens?

The science of economics does not establish what is good for the citizens, but neither do men of good will dispute about it (e.g., good working conditions for miners, respectable jobs for the racially discriminated, good recreational facilities for children, good housing, security of medical care, etc.). Nor is the purpose of ethical questioning to prove that these goals are good. The ethically concerned man raises the ethical question usually to force himself or somebody else to face the necessary means, painful though they be, for the goals he has always theoretically endorsed. Thus the ethical question can be purely a question of economics and an economics course appropriately replace the encyclicals. My experience as Lecturer of Medical Ethics at Georgetown Medical School led me to urge the authorities to discontinue these lectures. Good medicine was good morality, and vice versa, and the medical professors could cover the pertinent points in their regular courses far better than the philosopher or theologian.

Particularly difficult to predict for 2000 is the ethical impact the behavioral sciences will have in areas where they themselves have made little progress, e.g., human sexuality. Ethics will probably be as absorbed with sexual conduct in 2000 as it is now. Man's sexual life should be for him as fascinating and explosive and as far-reaching in its repercussions as now. But to understand what sexuality concretely is and how it can be matter for the creation of a fitting personal and interpersonal life, he will in 2000, in keeping with the new ethical methodology, turn almost exclusively to sciences such as psychology or sociology. At the present state of those sciences, we have little certainty as to what he will be finding there in thirty years. Lester Kirkendall, surveying two or three years ago, in the *Journal of Social Issues,* the results of research into sexual behavior, underlined the paucity of studies done or presently in progress. The admittedly limited and defective study of Kinsey is still being used by professional people because, on the whole, nothing less limited and defective has been done.

Thus one cannot exclude the possibility that in 2000 the ethical judgment on homosexuality may be the reverse of what it is commonly now. The prevailing

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opinion of psychiatrists and psychologists is presently that homosexual behavior reflects an emotional sickness or retarded growth. But there is reason to think that this is true only because those who take up homosexual behavior do it in the face of strong social taboos and therefore are often the victims of compulsions or unadjusted drives. The present scientific evidence does not exclude the possibility that those who took up homosexual behavior in a permissive society might be generally healthy from a psychological point of view and capable of integrating their sexual conduct into a fitting interpersonal life.

One final point: as may have already become clear, the fittingness of the response is always determined by what results in experience. Typical is the woman today who, having German measles during pregnancy, has an abortion and gets herself pregnant again. Decisive for her is what would be the experienced life of her child. With the odds 40-60 that the child would live with serious deformities, she feels obliged to improve chances for a good experienced life. The unconscious, non-experiencing fetus is, for her, merely a potentiality for life. Indicative of the lack of genuine dialogue presently in the Church is the charge of inconsistency in evaluating human life leveled by proponents of the old morality against those of the new. True, the new trend makes less of the human life of a fetus or a patient left only with vegetative functioning, while making more of the life of a prisoner condemned to die or a soldier or civilian in wartime. But this is not inconsistent. What the new trend values uniquely is *experienced life,* conscious personal and interpersonal actions and reactions.

The current shifting in Christian thinking on abortion illustrates also another change that should be completed by 2000: the exit of ethicists and moral theologians. For the new ethics, the only pertinent specialist in the matter at hand is the man of scientific and professional experience. For the rest, ethics will be simply the Christian community's creation of its ethos, its potent complex of moral ideas and goals, and the individual Christian's creative planning of experience for himself and others. In the present evolution of the abortion question, we see the phasing out of the last debate where the ethicist and moral theologian can speak out with authority and can be listened to. Those of us still alive in 2000 will be able to tell youth of the eloquence and pathos of those great debates on absolute right and wrong. They will, I presume, listen respectfully, showing wonder and appreciation and perhaps some regret. Then they and we will get back to serious work.

JAMES GUSTAFSON

'RESPONSIBILITY' & UTILITARIANISM

There is much in John Milhaven's predictive essay with which I concur, and even if one chose to make a different set of predictions about ethics in 2000, it would be difficult to ascertain briefly what evidences would count in favor of what predictions. Such is the nature of all predictions about the future. Thus my response is more in terms of hypothetical reflection; if Milhaven is correct, then ethicians have certain sorts of work to do in order to tidy up their thinking. I will focus my response on two items, the need for specification and clarification of the concept of responsibility, and the seemingly uncritical utilitarianism implied by Milhaven's prediction.

Certainly the notion of responsibility has caught the imagination of many persons at the present time; one thinks of Bernard Häring, Robert Johann, Barth and Bonhoeffer, as well as H. Richard Niebuhr. It is a rich term, resonating with moral seriousness, with involvement of the whole person, and with ascription of accountability. But it is also an elusive term, and thus it requires more careful analysis and use than many religious ethicians are likely to give it. One occasion on which this was made vivid to me was the summer in which I sought to assist the Japanese translator of Niebuhr's *The Responsible Self*. Apparently in Japanese there is only one character for responsibility, and its normal reference is legal liability. The problem was difficult, for we had to think of adjectives that would modify "liability" in such a way that Niebuhr's varied overtones might be communicated, or of combinations of terms that might communicate Niebuhr's meaning where it would be totally distorted by "liability." I have been secretly grateful that I will never know how successful Professor Ohara was since I will never learn Japanese.

The concept is much discussed by two streams of contemporary moral philosophy. The dominantly Anglo-Saxon stream usually discusses it in the context of two questions—the justification of punishment and the problem of freedom and determinism. The concept itself becomes refined: Kurt Baier, for example, distinguishes between being accountable, answerable, culpable, and liable. H. L. A. Hart distinguishes between role-, causal-, liability-, and capacity-responsibility. It is clear that Milhaven sees the future use of the general notion not in relation to the punishment question, but in terms of a more existential "ability to respond." That points to the second stream, namely existentialism and phenomenology, a stream that flows into religious use of the concept. But such a view must clarify the answers to the queries "responsibility to whom?" and "for what?" The point of alluding to these discussions is to indicate that appropriation of the notion of responsibility by religious ethicians demands greater clarity and rigor in its employment than appears to be necessary on the surface.

Certainly one of the continuing problems in the coming decades will be the issue of freedom and determinism as this bears upon both the ability to re-

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spond, and on accountability for one's actions. Charles Glock, a sensitive sociologist, is persuaded that one of the major transformations in belief in our time is from one that assumes freedom and therefore ascribes accountability, to one that assumes determinism and therefore radically limits, if it does not eliminate, accountability. If he is correct, and if this belief becomes absolutely regnant, moralists of the newer turn may become as anachronistic as Milhaven indicates moralists of an older turn are now. At least, Glock's judgment points to another dimension of the notion of responsibility that will require careful attention.

The second item in Milhaven's essay that calls for attention is the prediction (and seeming affirmation) of an uncritical utilitarianism. I believe the trends are contradictory, though the utilitarian one is probably more ascendent. It is not unusual, for example, for the person who wishes to abolish abortion laws on utilitarian moral grounds to wish to instigate stricter civil rights legislation on deontological "rights" grounds.

"Then do something that helps!" "Good medicine [is] good morality, and vice versa. . . ." These statements cry out for careful analysis, as Milhaven certainly knows. What is it that helps? What medicine is "good"? Helps whom? Whose good? A question as old as Plato will have to be reckoned with, namely, what is the good? I think it will be necessary to discard the use of such general notions, and to designate more precisely the varying elements embodied in human well-being. Physicians, psychiatrists, and social scientists will, I agree, make increasing contributions to our understanding both of the ends of action, and of the effective means. But whether moral discourse can be reduced to medical, psychiatric, or social scientific discourse is by no means clear. If what constitutes "good medicine" were clear, would we be as occupied with the questions of biological and medical experimentation on human beings as we are?

In 2000 the young *may* smile at the history of debates about the absolute right and the absolute wrong. If, however, they are at all like the contemporary young, they might be claiming that some things we thought were not absolutely wrong, such as war, are absolutely wrong. And about other matters they will be seeking to justify their opinions as to which course is better or worse; and, indeed, they might even be using the principle of double-effect!

The prospect is not only of an historically disproportionate ratio of priests to people, but of an age chasm magnifying the problems of communication.

PRIESTS AND PRIESTHOODS

JOHN D. DONOVAN

A sociological prediction concerning the Catholic priesthood in the year 2000 must begin with the demographic facts. This edict will not, of course, go unchallenged because in some circles, and these both sociological and non-sociological, this order of facts is often viewed as analytically primitive and unimportant. The trouble is that, however primitive they may be, the demographic realities will not be put down or they will not stay down. Relative to other orders of sociological facts they are "hard" rather than "soft" and this "hardness" directly or indirectly influences the structures and the styles of social systems and of the roles that people play in them. The simple and inescapable truth is that numbers and their subscripts will make a difference in the character of tomorrow's priesthood.

The first demographic fact is that the Catholic church in the United States will soon have a clergy-laity ratio drastically different than anything it has historically experienced. On the side of the clergy, it is clear that the number of priests who will still be "in" and "up and around" will be minimal. As yet, the statistical tables necessary to buttress this projection and to chart the depletion curve are unavailable. But the gross facts are common knowledge. Defections, laicizations, resignations, seminary drop-outs, and recruitment declines have been on the increase for the past few years.

Moreover, there is no present evidence for predicting a reversal of these trends sufficient to upset the projection of a minimal number of priests in the year 2000. Even if it is assumed that clerical defections, laicizations, and resignations have already peaked and that some former priests, now married or still celibate, might return to an acceptable ministry, the prognosis is negative. There will still be the ex-priests who will remain ex-priests. There will still be the annual attrition through death, sickness, and retirement. And there will still be the manpower gaps which widen each year when a shrinking class of ordinands is prayed into Holy Orders

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by even smaller classes of deacons, sub-deacons, etc. The demographic odds are that these losses will not be recovered and that some 30 years hence the Catholic church in the United States will be staffed by a relatively small cadre of ordained priests.

This projection concerning the number of tomorrow's clergy is neither new nor surprising nor unwelcome in some quarters. But it is only one side of the clergy-laity ratio. An even more dramatic demographic fact, a fact which pertains to the "souls" of priestly concern, seems to have been obscured by the myopia of ecclesiastical self-concern. This "hard" fact is that by the turn of the century the population of the United States will have experienced a growth variously estimated as between 40 to 70 percent. In cold statistics this means that a shrinking number of priests will have the responsibility of serving the spiritual needs of a population numbering as "few" as 280 million and as many as 340 million people. For those who read past statistics or boggle at their meaning, this *minimal* projection envisions an American population equal to our present 200 million plus all the people now living in England and France. However described this is a staggering projection of tomorrow's clergy-laity ratio, and the volumes that it speaks to the structural contexts and functional roles of the 21st century priesthood cannot be ignored. In the scriptural metaphor the harvest will be larger than ever but the number of clerical harvesters will be at an all-time low.

An added demographic dimension is provided and a new complication is introduced when we look at the profiles of these clerical and lay populations. Put directly, tomorrow's fewer priests will be middle-aged and older men. Nor should this skewed age composition of the clergy be surprising. It will only reflect two facts: (1) the younger priests and the seminarians have been overrepresented in those opting "out" of a ministerial career; and (2) the present generation does not promise to be an adequately fruitful source of vocation replacements. But perhaps the point is best made by noting that at the dawn of the 21st century this year's ordinands will be about 55 years of age. Not all, of course, will persevere in their ministry but those that do will help to bulge the clerical age profile in its upper ranges. This is bound to have significant implications for the future leadership structure of the church and for the ability of the church's institutions to respond to the pressures for continuing adaptation.

The grosser but more important demographic fact, however, is that some 30 years hence the population of the United States, the significant others of these older priests, will be heavily weighted toward the younger age groups. According to population experts the 20-year period between 1965 and 1985 will be marked by a 44 percent increase in the population aged 18 to 24 and by an 82 percent increase in the age group, 25 to 34. Conversely, the age group 45-54 will during this same period show a 1.5 percent decrease. Something of what this means may be suggested by noting that only 10 years hence the priests in the Archdiocese of Boston will confront a population in which one of every two persons will be under 26 years of age. The uniqueness of Boston in so many respects does not pertain here. What looms large, therefore, is the prospect not only of an historically disproportionate ratio of priests to people but of an age chasm between them which will magnify the problems of effective communication. By such grossly comparative measures these projections promise to make today's much publicized "generation gap" look like a minor league problem.

One final demographic fact must be added. Tomorrow's larger and younger population in the United States will be more educated than any population hitherto present to the services of Catholic priests. By the year 2000 approximately 75 percent of the population 25 years old and over will have completed high school compared to only 49 percent in 1965. Moreover, college enrollments are expected to show an almost 100 percent increase over the present figures. American collegians will then number about 14 million. The quality of their education aside, this young population will pose a massive intellectual challenge to a clergy older in age and depressed in manpower. Problems of language, symbol, and meaning, problems rooted in generationally different educational experiences are likely to deepen the numbers and age chasm. Demographically, it looks like a bad show.

Future of the Priesthood

These "hard" facts will not go away and they will make a difference for tomorrow's priesthood. They will not, however, determine the character of his ministry. This more qualitative projection depends in more substantial part on the kind of men who will make up the clerical cadre. The characteristics of those middle-aged and older are largely known because they are today's priests. In the long view, the more important group will be that composed of the children and the as yet unborn who may answer a call to the priesthood. Who will they be?

The facts here are admittedly "soft." There are so many complex intervening variables that any predictions as to who will select-in or select-out are more intuitive than scientific. Sociologically, the single, most decisive variable is the posture of the church vis-à-vis the internal and external pressures to adapt its structures in such fashion that they meet the genuinely spiritual needs of tomorrow's society. The evidence is that the church will be forced to such an adaptation but that it will be gradual, piecemeal, uneven, and conflict-ridden adaptation.

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The immediately important point, however, is that in such a situation the diocesan priesthood is at a severe disadvantage. Its direct subordination to the hierarchy and the general practitioner character of its ministry will hold little attraction for a generation more and more oriented to participatory democracy and to personal and role fulfillment via specialization. Indeed, many of today's ex-priests and ex-seminarians are living witnesses to this point. Two conditions—their withdrawal from the ministry and a predictable age-associated decline in the revolutionary zeal of like-minded colleagues who have opted to stick it out and to promote change from within —these will severely undercut the career appeal of the diocesan ministry, The prospect is that by default the role models of the more traditional priesthood, of good men conditioned to sacrifice their persons to the priestly office, will prevail. Like will, therefore, attract like to the diocesan ministry. These old-young ordinands will still be few and their "fit" will be inadequate to the needs of the many, the young, and the educated of America in the year 2000.

The non-diocesan clergy, on the other hand, has structural and functional potentialities more congenial to the chances of selection-in by tomorrow's youth. Over-simply stated, their para-hierarchical position in the church and their diversity of functions provide liberating options which increase the prospects of personal and role fulfillment. Many of these orders and congregations are even now caught up in re-institutionalization processes which will broaden and deepen the values and the appeals of their ministries. Their viability, if it is not aborted or squandered, will attract some young men, and even some older men, who will not be scared away by the certainty of uncertainty structured into the future of the ministry. They will be men for whom the ministry will be a challenge worth the struggle because their commitment will be to spiritual values rather to structures. They will be religious men rather than churchmen. But such men will still be few in numbers. The qualities they will have to possess are heroically demanding and some of them will not be able to withstand the inevitable frustrations. Those who survive could be a new frontier elite of the church. Against powerful odds and notwithstanding a fraternal majority older in years and in spirit, these few young priests could be the new fathers of a reborn church. Admittedly, the crystal ball and the wishing well may here be cojoined but the "soft" facts are at least as persuasive as the thought.

These sociological predictions regarding the how many and the who of the 21st century priesthood only hint at what the priesthood will be like. They describe the church's future manpower situation, a situation which in the church, as in other social systems, operates to set structural and functional limits on social and occupational roles. But here, as elsewhere, these limits typically say more to what will not be than to what will be. Thus tomorrow's minimal number of priests will not permit the church the luxury of ecclesiastical structures and clerical function which were tolerable in a religious economy of relative plenty. Apart from any other consideration, this manpower situation projects an economy of scarce resources. It raises questions and it will necessarily be a part of the answers but it does not describe the character of tomorrow's priesthood.

What will the priesthood be like? What will be the priest's major functions? How will these functions be fulfilled in the church and in the society of the year 2000? In sociological perspective, the predictions here must take their substance from the contemporary facts which permit extrapolations descriptive of the church and the society which the priesthood will be called up to serve. These facts are criss-crossed as never before by processes of change operating at an incredible tempo. Indeed, the omnipresent fact of revolutionary change reverses the order of the old clerical axiom and establishes it as a principle. For tomorrow's priesthood the sociological reading will not be *sic sacerdos sic populus*. It will be *sic populos sic sacerdos*.

This reading does not remove either the responsibility or the possibility of priestly leadership. It simply predicts that the priest will no longer enjoy the unique status of an instant success. The value systems and the social institutions of American society will be even more secularized than they are today and they will not recognize a sacred order or sacred authority which does not speak to their personal and social needs. Some will reject out of hand the whole spectrum of transcendental rationalizations but others will still be open to the religious answers to the recurring problems of ultimacy, meaning, and identity. Whether or not these latter remain open to such answers depends on the "fit" of the church and its ministry to their needs. They and not the church will call the shots.

This mixed bag of needs and of people prevision a multiplicity of priesthoods. The old guard, both clerical and lay, will not quickly fade away. Some people will need a priesthood still structured in terms of a bureaucratic office, and there will still be priests honestly convinced that their office is the core of their ministry. Moreover, the church as an institution will still have interests and commitments which will protect this more traditional concept of the priesthood. At the same time, the survival needs of the church, the expressive needs of tomorrow's new and different and larger population, and the manpower situation will conspire to force a new concept of the priesthood. It will be rediscovered as an essentially expressive role, a role played by a person committed to the Christian message not as dogma but as a meaningful response to the fundamental problems of man and society. It will be a profoundly pastoral role structured flexibly enough to provide for the needs of both priests and people.

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This new conceptualization of the priesthood is already previsioned. There will be married as well as celibate priests; there will be worker-priests, part-time priests, short-term priests, and other varieties of hyphenation. And there will be ex-priests officially disenfranchised but unofficially exercising their clerical functions. Some will be called upon to function in guru fashion because for an increasing number of persons religion will be a personal and private affair. Others may function in a more exclusively cultic role. Still others will not withdraw to the circle of the few but will be Christian revolutionaries wherever the action is or should be. The priest of the 21st century will not be a professional *qua* priest. He will be a person dedicated to persons where and as he finds them and dedicated to the relevance of the Christian message for them.

The pastoral focus of these multiple priesthoods will speed up the already obsolescent differentiation of functions among diocesan and regular clergy. The luxury of special apostolates reserved for or dominated by one or another congregation will not be possible because neither the manpower situation nor the religious mission of the church to man and to society will be able to tolerate it. The primacy of a pastoral ministry will force the regular clergy to phase out their identification with at least some specialized organizational activities, perhaps most notably in education. This will not require the sacrifice of the religious and personal values of their communal life but this life will take on a variety of more functionally relevant forms. Indeed, the gap between the diocesan and regular priesthoods will be further narrowed as more and more diocesan priests establish communities outside of or alongside structures under hierarchical control. The multiple priesthoods of the 21st century will be one and many.

These predictions have said nothing of the processes through which the changes will be made nor have they referred to the future of the laity. Briefly, power confrontations and diffusion will continue to describe the change process. An embattled hierarchy will be forced to concede to the demands of an organized clergy and to the realities of the church's new world situation in manpower and in value terms. Demonstrations, picketlines, and even strikes are predictable where the hierarchy is intransigent, and the advent of multiple priesthoods or new clerical powers in one country or diocese are bound to become models for diffusion and imitation elsewhere.

A danger which should not be lightly dismissed is that the organization of priests to effect change may result in simply a new bureaucratic power structure, no less able to withstand the temptations toward rigidity than the old. Indeed, this is suggested by the preoccupation of such associations with continuity rather than with discontinuity in the future. It should be noted that the priesthood of a laity invited to ordination is not a conspicuous prospect or concern in their deliberations. Deacons, or lesser priests, will, of course, be accepted and, given the manpower situation, will be more and more visible in the future church. But as for the ordination of laymen, there is generally a clerical silence.

The demographic and other sociological facts suggest, however, that some lay persons will be invited to function as ordained priests. Their number will probably be small for some time to come because such a radical restructuring of the priesthood would require not only hierarchical endorsement but grass-roots initiation and support. Moreover, it is unlikely that women will be called to ordination because, the theological question aside, there is little reason to expect that their status in the larger society will change enough to support such action. Some discontinuity will, therefore, enter the system but the more likely prognosis is that of a continuity marked by minimal priests and multiple priesthoods. Beyond this, the sociological futurist could only run the even greater risk of serving up an unholy and unscientific cocktail blended of transient facts, wishful thinking, and normative prescriptions.

JOSEPH H. FICHTER

FAREWELL GENERAL PRACTITIONER

Anyone who speculates what the changing church will be like thirty years from now is a brave man, but Professor Donovan protects his bravery with a distinction between hard data and soft data. If demographic bases are solid (and many a demographer has slipped on them) there does seem to be a trend toward a declining ratio of clergy to laity. On the other hand, if current multiple clergy roles continue to expand there will indeed be "multiple priesthoods" in the year 2000.

If I were to refute Professor Donovan I would have to be braver than he is—which is not the case—and I would have to produce evidence he does not have—which is not the case. For many years I have maintained that the central problem in the American Church is a lack of competent and trained managers (bishops, chancery officials, provincials, superiors) and that is why I think his best sentence is this: "An embattled hierarchy will be forced to concede to the demands of an organized clergy and to the realities of the church's new world situation in manpower and in value terms."

Obviously manpower shortage ties in with manpower utilization. Panicky prelates will be embattled by fewer troops, but troops who may resent discipline and question authority. One statistic is clear: the religious orders are losing proportionately more men, both priests and seminarians, than is the case with the diocesan clergy. Diocesan priests man the parishes, and the parishes are

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multiplying. The religious order priests man the specialized ministries, and these are declining.

Parishes are where the people are, and the parishes are going to stay, even though they may take different shapes. But the shape of the parish ministry is changing because the day of the general practitioner is over. More and more diocesan parish priests are seeking specialized training; they are becoming professional experts in a variety of roles: in music, liturgy, counseling, social work, teaching, and other service roles. They already represent the "multiple priesthoods."

Priests who are specialized professionals are not so tractable or dependent or "immature" as the general practitioner. This may be part of the reason why religious order clergy, who are for the most part the professionals in the specialized ministries of the church, are leaving the priesthood faster than the diocesan clergy. This is a real dilemma: the parish ministry has to be maintained; the specialized ministries can be sacrificed; but the parish clergy are moving from generalized to specialized roles; and the specialists are leaving.

Of course, other factors account for the exodus from the priesthood. One of them may be "community" as now lived by religious order priests. Professor Donovan foresees that "more and more diocesan priests [will] establish communities." There is indeed currently a kind of kibbutz syndrome among seminarians and younger priests, an expressed longing for the personal fulfillment of the Christian *koinonia*. This too seems a dilemma: the quest for community by some is balanced by the escape from community by others.

Ivan Illich has a solution for all this, and perhaps a vision of the future. He says that we really do not need all these priests. Just get a man—any good, gainfully employed, charismatic man—and ordain him to perform once a week at the Eucharistic meal. Perhaps Eugene Kennedy and Ruud Bunnik are also moving in this direction when they urge a declericalization of the church. This irreverent thought must not be excluded from the options for the future.

Finally, I am not so sure that the ordination of women is as "unlikely" as Professor Donovan suggests. Surely on the campus where he teaches, and in at least one of the departments of that campus, he must have heard about SCUM, NOW, WITCH, WRAP and the other sub-groups of the Women's Liberation Movement. Unequal treatment of women in the church, including their lack of access to power positions and the priestly role, may help to explain why the largest exodus of church professionals is among the sisterhoods.

It needs no prophet to say that change is endemic to every profession in the American sociocultural system. Anyone who thinks that the priesthood is now in a transitional "phase" will probably have to say the same thing in the year 2000. Priests are meant to be agents of change and neither they nor the People of God are likely to settle down within the next three decades.

The idea of a single orthodox theology will be regarded generally as one of the unfortunate historical aberrations produced in the anti-Modernist era.

THE NECESSARY ECUMENISM

RICHARD McBRIEN

There is no point in trying to predict the *forms* of the church in the year 2000 if one is not prepared to ask the prior question of the church's *function*. And there is no point in inquiring about the ecumenical situation of the church at the turn of the next century unless one has some clear and serviceable ideas about the meaning of ecumenism today.

The contemporary theological discussion regarding the mission of the church has been taking place somewhere between two extreme, and mutually antagonistic, positions which continue to elicit some popular, but little or no serious, academic interest and support, i.e., between those who assume that the question of function has already been settled in favor of the counter-Reformation and early twentieth-century view of the church, and those who insist that the question of function is unanswerable except in relative and constantly shifting humanistic terms. The former argues that the church is the ordinary means of salvation *de iure* and *de facto*. The latter suggests that the church, its Eucharist, and even Christ himself, are nothing except the expressions of man. Thus, the question of the function of the church is an aspect of the prior question of the meaning of man, and that question, everyone agrees, is very much of an open-ended one.

Ironically, both these groups share a common tendency to identify the church with the Kingdom of God. For the one, to be in the church is to be in the Kingdom

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of God. The church is the ordinary means of salvation because membership in that community brings one within the orbit of God's reign and favor. *The world becomes the Kingdom insofar as it becomes the church.* For the other, the church happens wherever people are becoming friends, wherever there is genuine compassion, justice, and freedom. *The world becomes the church insofar as it becomes the Kingdom of God.*

The response to the ecumenical problematic is shaped by one's basic concept of the church. For the Catholic who stands in the ecclesiological tradition of Bellarmine, Tromp, and Journet, for example, ecumenism must be ultimately a means, however subtle and sophisticated, of achieving the conversion of those outside the Catholic church. The ecumenical situation of the church in the year 2000 is a question of how successful the church will have been in winning over these outsiders to the Catholic point of view, and therefore to Catholic belief and practice. The Catholic at the opposite end of the spectrum, who prefers to see the church as an expression, if not a projection, of the human spirit, will probably want to measure the success or failure of ecumenism by the extent to which the church (organized religiosity) has become the world (genuine human community). And then we can call the whole thing "church," since that is what "church" is supposedly all about in the first place.

I should suggest that the best impulses of the Second Vatican Council (particularly its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), when coupled with the converging insights of contemporary theology (whether of Rahner, Schillebeeckx, Metz, Küng, Moltmann, or Pannenberg) lead us to a more productive middle ground.

On the one hand, the church must always be distinguished as the community of men and women who confess the Lordship of Jesus of Nazareth, who ratify that faith sacramentally, and who commit themselves to membership and mission for the sake of the Kingdom of God, acknowledging all the while that the Kingdom happens more often in secular rather than religious ways: the blind receive their sight, the deaf have their hearing restored, the crippled are healed, the poor are given hope, and so forth (see Mt 25:31-46). It must be a community which is engaged fulltime and with total commitment to the tasks of *diakonia,* not as a tactic for future conversions or simply for good example (as the concept "preevangelization" implies), but because this is the essential work of the church, and an integral part of her missionary task.

On the other hand, the church is not meant to be the ordinary means of salvation, empirically (*de facto*) nor ideally (*de iure*). Not all men are called to membership in the church. Only the Kingdom of God has this claim upon us. For it is not the one who says, "Lord, Lord," who will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of the Father (Mt 7:21). The criterion of salvation will not have anything essential to do with one's proximity to, or distance from, the Christian community. Man shall be judged in terms of his humanity alone. The living of the Gospel, even when there is no explicit reference to it or acceptance of it, is the one "ordinary means of salvation." Some men may, indeed, be called to realize and to symbolize these human values within the context of the church, and to the extent that they fulfill their own human potential therein, the church will have become for them an "extraordinary means of salvation."

Meaning of Ecumenism

What, then, might be the ecumenical situation of this kind of church in the year 2000 (if, in fact, we can speak of a meaningful marriage between the theological rhetoric of the preceding paragraphs and the stubbornly empirical reality of the contemporary church)? Until recently, it was assumed that the ecumenical movement was concerned only with the interrelationships among the various Christian churches in their common endeavor to achieve, under God and in his Spirit, the unity of the Body of Christ. But the word "ecumenism" itself has reference to the world at large, to the whole inhabited earth. It seems, therefore, that our ecumenical projections into the next century should anticipate the wider meaning which the movement is already beginning to embrace. We are dealing here not only with the quest for Christian unity, but also with the dialogue between the Christian community and the various non-Christian religious communities, and even beyond this to the dialogue with the world as such, its indifference to, or impatience with, all religious faith and practice notwithstanding. The Church of the year 2000 will find itself in the midst (if not on the sidelines) of a more intensely pluralistic world. Its future place in this world will be determined by the nature and quality of its response to this wider pluralism.

When one has been liberated from the belief that all men are supposed to belong to the church, at least in the ideal order, he can begin to accept the fact of pluralism as a positive "sign of the times" (see the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et spes,* arts. 4-10). Pluralism is a value to be promoted and sustained, insofar as it is an open-ended and a living pluralism, produced by genuine dialogue among its several components. Gregory Baum reminds us in his recent book, *Faith and Doctrine*, that the present situation is characterized by a new sense of human solidarity and brotherhood, on the one hand, and a new openness to truth, on the other. Pluralism makes this necessary, but it also makes it possible. And dialogue is the lifeblood of pluralism.

In the final accounting, the dialogue is about the realization of the Kingdom of God in history, and whether or not man has reason to hope in its final reali-

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zation in the future, beyond history. This is not a Catholic issue alone, nor a Christian issue, nor even a specifically religious issue. It is the human problematic *par excellence*. And that is why the ecumenical situation of the church in the year 2000 will have to be measured not by the extent to which the world has become the church, nor by the extent to which the church has become the world, but rather by the extent to which the church has facilitated and sustained the dialogue among men about the coming of the Kingdom of God, about the realization of justice, compassion, truthfulness, freedom, tolerance and peace. "The spirit of dialogue is friendship," Pope Paul VI suggested in his encyclical letter *Ecclesiam Suam* (August 6, 1964), "and, even more, it is service."

While the Christian community cannot shrink from its own conviction that Jesus of Nazareth is the focal point of history or that it has a special responsibility to proclaim and to celebrate his Lordship, it will always have to measure its effect in terms of the realization of the Gospel rather than in terms of the extension of the church or the advance of the cause of religion. It must engage in its tasks, in other words, under the impact of the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel ("Lord, when did we see you hungry . . .?") rather than the polemical treatises of the counter-Reformation or the early twentieth-century manuals of theology.

If the preceding assumptions are valid and accepted, then we should look for a strengthening of pluralism through dialogue at every point of Christian presence and contact in the world: in the encounter of Christian with Christian (ecclesiastical ecumenism), with the non-Christian (religious ecumenism), and with the religiously indifferent and uncommitted (secular ecumenism). And at each point the dialogue will take place on four different levels: theology, worship, polity, and social response.

1. *Ecclesiastical Ecumenism in the Year 2000.* The idea that there is a single orthodox theology against which all other interpretations of Christian faith are to be measured is already in badly shattered condition. It retains remarkable political strength within the church, but no academic or scholarly support whatsoever. By the turn of the next century, this ideological understanding of doctrine will be regarded generally as one of the unfortunate historical aberrations produced in the anti-Modernist era (although hardly limited to that period). There will be pluralism of theology even beyond what has been endorsed in the Decree on Ecumenism (art. 17), but one hopes that it will be a pluralism of deeply rooted and carefully explored traditions rather than broadly irenic varieties of theological punditry. The establishment of the new Theological Commission in Rome is only a beginning. Comparable commissions in the future will include not only the Rahners, the Congars, and the Schnackenburgs of that day, but also the Moltmanns, the Macquarries, and the Käsemanns. The systematic and critical exploration of the Christian tradition is not a matter of Catholic interest alone, and neither is the concern to preserve legitimate academic freedom without prejudice to the integrity of this historic faith. The ecumenical diversification of university, college, and seminary faculties will be the rule rather than the exception. The posture of the holdouts will be even more anomalous and untenable than at present.

This pluralism in theological interpretation, emerging from dialogue among Christians on how to think and speak of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, will reflect and influence pluralism in worship. Intercommunion, now so carefully circumscribed by admonitions and legalities, will assume new proportions. Already we are beginning to recognize that real unity often reaches across denominational lines and that real disunity exists within the same denominational perimeter. The distinctive values of each tradition will be preserved, but these will be seen as an enrichment rather than as a barrier to common worship. We have even now a plurality of rites within the Catholic tradition. Why should we not expect a broader plurality in the church of the future: Lutheran rites, Presbyterian rites, Anglican rites, and so forth?

Intercommunion raises the question of polity. Who are the official ministers of the liturgical assembly? To what extent must the local liturgical congregation reflect the broader realities of the church universal? Must the whole thing rest after all on the papacy and the college of bishops, traditionally understood? The papacy, in its present canonical condition, has been a barrier rather than a catalyst of Christian unity. But it need not be obstructive. Shorn of canonical and ideological armament, it can become again a principal source of unity, in the sense that Bishop Kilmer Myers of California once spoke of the need for a single international voice to speak in the name of the whole brotherhood of churches, or in the sense that Wolfhart Pannenberg has spoken of the papacy of the future as representative of the unity of the universal church and also as a major point of contact with the Christian tradition in its development from the beginning and through all times (*Theology and the Kingdom of God,* pp. 99-100). The abolition of the papacy by the year 2000 would not resolve the inevitable dialectic between tradition and experience, universality and particularity, authority and freedom, while a renewed papacy, closer to the script of the New Testament and theology, could preserve the dialectic in proper balance. A deeper penetration of the doctrine of collegiality will make this goal realizable, because collegiality means, among other things, pluralism through dialogue.

Beyond theology, worship, and polity, a dialogically nourished pluralism will emerge even more forcefully than today in the area of Christian social action and in more imaginative and ambitious terms than described in

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the Decree on Ecumenism, art. 12. But if the opinion polls are correct, the church will have to spend a good part of the next thirty years reeducating its own membership regarding the essential connection between the Gospel and socio-political life. This educative process should produce some substantial realignments, more dramatic perhaps than one can now safely predict. In any event, the church of the year 2000 will be less heavily committed to the support of its own "plant" and more openly disposed to assign its remaining resources to so-called secular areas of concern.

2. *Religious Ecumenism in the Year 2000.* Since ecumenism means more than the reunification of the Christian churches, this pluralism of theology, worship, polity, and social response, will have to incorporate the values and insights of the various non-Christian religious traditions. Ecumenical theology will require more than a sympathetic understanding of Barth and Bultmann from the Catholic side, or of Rahner and Schillebeeckx from the Protestant side. There will be prestigious and exceedingly influential forums for religious dialogue as the weight of the various traditions is brought to bear on the problems of mankind and meaningful symbols of understanding and of celebration are fashioned. There are trends already in this direction.

Ecumenical worship will have to find a wider basis than the Christian Eucharist, actualizing somehow the common religious affirmation of transcendental reality to which man owes praise and thanksgiving. While not replacing the specific role of the Christian Eucharist, such worship would enhance the possibilities of wider human dialogue and insure the development of pluralism grounded in the Spirit.

Ecumenical polity will demand something more broadly based than the World Council of Churches, whether it be called a World Council of Religions, or whatever. The principal issues will not be the validity and authority of each group's officialdom and professional personnel or of its distinctive theological and pastoral traditions, but whether collaboration among them is possible as they seek, in common response to social and political crises, to realize and to embody the Kingdom of God in the world —a task to which no religious group can lay exclusive claim.

3. *Secular Ecumenism in the Year 2000.* Christian and non-Christian theologies alike will acknowledge, more precisely even than now, that theology is as much the study of man as the study of God. Accordingly, these theologists will be locked in dialogue with the wider, non-theological community on the radical questions of man and of the meaning of history. "Wherever men are trying to understand themselves and the world," Paul VI wrote in *Ecclesiam Suam*, "we can communicate with them."

There may be pluralism of worship in the broadest sense, i.e., a pluralism which brings us to the point of common celebration, of showing one another how our depth-experiences can be explained, multiplied, and intensified. There will be greater dialogue in the area of polity, to the extent that the Christian community by the year 2000, will have entered more fully the discussion on due process and democratization. Finally, there will be more intense dialogue on issues of social and political import, producing from time to time perhaps the kind of consensus statement that emerged from the United Nations in its Declaration of Universal Human Rights. Indeed, if the church has any major contributions to make over the next thirty years, it is in the defense of the integrity and freedom of every person in an increasingly automated and technologically impersonal society.

The church's task today, in the year 2000, and always, is to proclaim, embody, celebrate, and realize the Kingdom of God in history, and to offer itself as a credible sign of hope in the final perfection of the Kingdom beyond history. The church carries out this task in a world whose pluralistic character is becoming increasingly clear. But without dialogue, genuine pluralism is impossible. We have instead a mélange of conflicting and competing ideologies, struggling for domination and control. Freedom, justice, the pursuit of truth, and peace do not thrive in such a context. If the church should find over the next thirty years, however, that it cannot operate on the principle of dialogue in the service of pluralism, then one has a right to ask about the viability of its future.

Will the church respond positively? Probably yes; if not by conviction, then under the cumulative impact of various social, economic, and political pressures. Every institution, whether an object of faith or not, wants to survive. And it will become progressively clearer to all interested parties that the issue here is one of survival.

ROGER L. SHINN

MORE THAN SURVIVAL

Most of my own past guesses about the future that has now become present were so off-target that I hardly know how to start guessing about the year 2000. So I admire anyone who will stick his neck out and let the rest of us hack at it.

I start with one solid agreement with Richard McBrien. The ancient and long-honored slogan, "Outside the church no salvation," has had its day. It is useless and unbelievable now, as perhaps it always was even when it seemed more plausible. In the nature of the case it could be maintained only by (1) an intolerable narrowness and possessiveness or (2) a definition of "the true church" that had slight relationship to empirical churches. I am glad that Father McBrien has rejected both stunts.

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Almost everybody recognizes today that the church at its best is a community of faith within a pluralistic world. It is the community that declares God's reconciling activity in Jesus Christ and accepts its share in that reconciling mission. In telling the world about Jesus, it invites all hearers to participate in the community of faith without condemnation or condescension towards those who do not.

But yet the perplexing question: How pluralistic can a world be? Men cannot live together without some elements of consensus and some shared values. At a minimum they must concur on some methods of resolving controversies and balancing the claims of man against man, of group against group. McBrien says, "Man shall be judged in terms of his humanity alone." But in the very next sentence he seems to equate this humanity with "the living of the Gospel," whether or not there is explicit reference to that Gospel. Equating these two criteria—humanity and the living of the Gospel—is a stupendous act of faith. I would like to make it; I hope that I actually do. A pluralistic world does not.

For men "to fulfill their own human potential" means many things. In most societies it has meant considerable cruelty and snobbery. It meant something vastly different to Nebuchadnezzar and Gautama Buddha, to Genghis Khan and Francis of Assisi, to Adolf Hitler and to Martin Luther King. Empirically speaking, "humanity" is defined by everything men do. But through the Hebrew prophets and Jesus of Nazareth there came to mankind a revelation of what humanity is and can be. Like it or not, we have that on our hands and must live with it. Christians must not say that they alone understand "humanity." But they must say that what they know they cannot surrender or distort.

I expect the future to bring immense pluralism to church and world. This pluralism will give the church the opportunity to engage in conversation with other religions and irreligions, and in the conversation the church will learn as well as testify. This will mean, as McBrien insists, ecumenism and pluralism—ecclesiastical, religious, and secular. In that setting the prophetic spirit will have the urgent and delicate double responsibility: to point to the working of God in unexpected places, often far outside recognizable ecclesiastical orbits; yet to say boldly on occasion that in some pathways lies infidelity. Both sides of the responsibility are risky, and there is no escaping the risks.

I close with two dissents from McBrien's reasoning. First, I am not persuaded by his hopes for the papacy. Given the pluralism that he advocates, I wonder how he can expect or why he wants "a single international voice to speak in the name of the whole brotherhood of churches." And—granted this may be a Protestant prejudice—the traditions of the papacy make it a peculiarly inept candidate for a role that is in any case so dubious.

Second, I wish McBrien had not concluded by saying the issue is "one of survival." Obviously survival is a problem, and the church will be pressured into doing some things, good and bad, for survival. But there would be no Christian church if for Jesus Christ the issue had been survival. And the church will be more faithful when it gives less attention to survival.

The future theologian will be caught in a more uncomfortable squeeze between the academy and* life. *He will have to spend more time as a simple humanist.

FROM CHAOS TO TORONTO I

ANSELM ATKINS

Theology, considered as the occupation of men who write books, hold professorships, excavate tells, interpret texts, gather at conventions, and die amid banks of *Festschriften,* is the intellectual luxury of a leisured elite supported by the benevolence of an urbane, stable civilization. As such, theology may be nothing but a memory by the year 2000. In those days society will consist only of packs of bushwackers and cowering householders. Overpopulation will no longer be a problem, though hunger still will be. Even so, much knowledge and many documents will survive, and in a hundred years the world may be ready to do it all again. In this interholocaustal society, certain passages from the New Testament will continue to inspire people. There will be mysticism and revivalism as usual. Sacraments will be dispensed, rosaries will be said, and snakes will be handled. Religious thinkers too will arise, but they will hardly be interested in critical editions of the Fathers, Reformation research, transcendental Thomism, or papal infallibility. The existential question is: what am I as a theologian and as a man doing to prevent this kind of a year 2000?

It has finally come to a matter of first things first. The

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theologian must give himself to two problems: what is man, and, under what political and social conditions can he continue to exist as man? Theological enterprises which do not illumine these life-and-death problems are frivolous. The theologian of course, like any other *homo ludens*, may be permitted his little frivolities, but these should be recognized for what they are. The serious theology of the next thirty years will be on the way to becoming anthropology (including sociology, psychology, and biology) and politics (both speculatively and *actually*). "Theology and political science" will be, for a while, the theological student's most exciting interdisciplinary course. Reinhold Niebuhr will be rediscovered.

The future theologian will be caught in a more uncomfortable squeeze between the academy and *life*. He will have to spend more time as a simple humanist fighting the Plague: war, poverty, overpopulation, misunderstanding, murder. He must try his speculation on the "biological time bomb," power politics, revolution, ethics at the international level, counter-insurgency, and the prospect of 1984 (only four more voting days, says *Ramparts*). Not that pure research isn't useful—and I know that Marx wrote books and lived in the British Museum—but how much time do you think we have?

[II]

The present alignments in Catholic theology (left, center, right) will continue. There is no reason to think one wing will die naturally or be "converted to a better mind." The right will hold the allegiance of most bishops. Enough young men will be attracted to it to keep some, at least, of the stricter seminaries in operation, so that there will be no lack of scholastic theologians and professors. The right will be as stable during the next four hundred years as it has been for the last four hundred.

In the center are the brilliant, scholarly, respectable, unimpeachably orthodox men, many of whom have liberal tendencies and are able to bring to their theology much that is best in modern philosophy, science, and culture. Nearly all the eminent Catholic theologians of the last thirty years belong in this group: Congar, de Lubac, Daniélou, Rahner, von Balthasar, and Lonergan. Men of this stamp will flourish, having many followers (including the rest of the bishops), as well as full freedom of expression, within the church.

The future of the left is less secure, except among book publishers. It has little cohesiveness, since by its premise of pluralism it tolerates contradictory methods, presuppositions and conclusions. Whereas many theologians of the center share an enlightened, personalistic neo- or transcendental-Thomism, the left goes at theology higgledy-piggledy. In addition, the left does not always have full command of the tradition (e.g., Dewart is accused of not doing his Thomist homework). And there is a distinct possibility that church authority may try a wholesale repression of radical theology and officially eject the leftish theologians. On the other hand, the left offers greater "relevance" and claims to be the wave of the future. Candidates for left-wing theology will be those for whom the center has lost its credibility, and who are attempting reconstructions from their own various perspectives. It is hard to imagine schools of any size forming on the left, but there may be wide acceptance of general programmatic principles such as the Christianness of secularity.

The center may show some slippage to the left. Küng, Schillibeeckx, Novak, Metz and McKenzie seem to have shifted leftward in mid-career. There will likewise be a tendency on the left to pass out of the spectrum entirely (though some may drop from dead center: Charles Davis). Perhaps this signals the need for more extended, concerned dialogue between the left and center.

[III]

Systems of theology will not disappear, in spite of the present anti-systematic temper. After all, a system is not a final solution, but a hypothetical construct, a probe. A system is produced when theological material is articulated in conceptual terms supplied by any methodical, nominally coherent discipline. Earlier conceptual frameworks were provided by a mythical (Hebraic or gnostic) world-view or by some rational (Greek, Kantian, Heideggerian, etc.) philosophy. There will be no let-up of philosophical theologies because the history of philosophy has not come to an end: indeed, even mythical theologies will survive. But the interdisciplinary tendency of future theology will see systems based not on philosophy alone but on the conceptualizations of political science, sociology, historiography and the arts. The construction of such systems will, of course, be complemented or even overshadowed by the piecemeal work of empirical research in Scripture, early church, patristics, primitive and world religions. But theological advances will not depend so much on the discovery of new material as on reflection upon what, for the most part, we already know. The question will be: what significance do our findings have for theology, religion and Christian belief? The various theological answers will necessarily be rational, theoretical, constructural, and therefore tending toward the systematic. For that is what happens when empirical data is interpreted.

[IV]

No matter what scholarly advances are made in New Testament and early Christian studies, the alternatives for belief or skepticism as we now experience them will remain about the same. The dilemma that grew out of Kierkegaard's *Postscript* remains valid and unsolved: be-

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lief cannot rest on historical facts and findings, for scholarship can never come to a conclusion; and yet faith has to be more than a leap pure and simple. The Christian must continually face the question posed by Celsus: What business have you got being a Christian in this kind of world? Thus theology will be more apologetic that kerygmatic. The main question will be, how can Christianity still be believed; or, as Tillich put it, "Can the Christian message be adapted to the modern mind without losing its essential and unique character?" (or: ". . . Can Rosemary Ruether Ever Forget Gregory Nazianzen and Find True Happiness?"). The questions raised by old liberals and modernists out of their historical criticism, and the theologically-ignored problems of the phenomenology of religion, are still waiting for answers, despite the "business as usual" attitude of many good Catholic writers, particularly in the biblical field. In this respect we have not gone far beyond Ferdinand Christian Baur, who was, according to Peter Hodgson, "confronted by many of the same problems that have become so vitally important to us today: the problem of the radical historicity of the Christian faith, the hermeneutical relation between past and present or between text and interpreter, the quest for a non-supernatural understanding of the relation between God and world, the focusing of theology upon anthropology without simply surrendering language about God but indeed making it possible in a new way, and the first lineaments of a 'secular' theology, with its positive assessment of the conjunction between Christianity and the modern world." (Will the newly-established Theological Commission at Rome attempt to do the same thing to new Catholic theology that the Biblical Commission did to the "premature" birth of Catholic Biblical scholarship? How hopeful poor von Hügel had been about the Biblical Commission in its formative stage!)

[V]

Theologians need to acquire an elemental sense of what it is to be a freshly evolved biological specimen. How have we gotten here and what are we doing now? Consider what it means to be a flint-knapping (or shard-collecting) biped who recently began walking erect on the shifting crust of a small planet near a modest star, who "has a religion" and is "doing theology." How does the anathematizing of heretics fit into that? What are our totem poles? The theologian must expand his mind to see beyond church history and bible history to prehistoric and geological history.

[VI]

Where has the theological or religious world-view come from? On page ten of *Planets* in the "*Life* Science Library" there is a diagram of "the Egyptian cosmos," with Nut, Shu, and Geb—the kind of picture Old Testament students are so familiar with. From that Egyptian diagram science has gone one way, religion another. The theologian's story about "how things are" is a highly-evolved, rationalized version of that or some similar myth. When he talks about man, the world, and God's "plan" for the world, is he not in a way still drawing Egyptian pictures? Yes—to the extent that he ignores the stock scientific dimensions—physical, astronomical, biological, socio-cultural, historical—of what he, descendant of a little tree-swinging tarsier, really is. He must break away from the warm yellow light of his desk and *feel himself* hurtling through Nietzsche's icy spaces. Otherwise he will have nothing to say to the man of the year 2000.

Yet even the scientist is a hairy death-carrying human being like any other. He is faced with questions which the theologian presumably is equipped to frame more systematically, precisely and appropriately than is the scientist. I do not foresee that any advances in science or human self-understanding will dispose of love-and-death questions, or eliminate the need for attempts at theological answers. Life may change a lot in the next 30 years, but love and death are going to be about the same. Though there may be quite a bit more of both.

[VII]

A tendency will start in the left and left-center to use theological sources (authorities, texts, data, ideas) quite different from the ones given in the old treatises. Tanquerey, our Catholic manualist,' anchors his doctrinal positions in authoritative pronouncements of the church, Scripture (proof-texts), the writings of the fathers and "reason" (scholastic argument). Tillich's classical enumeration of sources departs from this in one important respect. To Scripture (as experienced and interpreted in the community) and church history (the thoughts and acts of the community from the beginning until now), he significantly adds "the material presented by the history of religion and culture." The latter source will overshadow the others in coming years. No product of human culture (except perhaps differential equations) will be theologically inoperable.

Progressive theology will thus move to its borderlines and become interdisciplinary. Alan Geyer has recently sketched aspects of this movement in *The Christian Century*. The theological specialist who ignores borderline problems will have a hard time justifying his work to the religious public as well as to his fellow theologians. Theology will begin to be judged not only for its truth, but also for its goodness or *value;* and its value will be measured in part by the extent to which it can throw light on or catch light from other contemporary secular disciplines.

A theology so situated at the circumference of its

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circle (not to say outside it) will have some hard questions to ask about itself. For example, (1) what becomes of Scripture and the other traditional sources, (2) why and how will philosophy give over to physical, behavioral, and historical sciences as a theological tool, and (3) what will characterize theology as a distinct subject once it has merged with another discipline?

The problem of the religious validity of our sacred writings is structurally (or hermeneutically?) similar to the problem of the relation of Christianity to other world religions. Very few "orthodox" theologians have taken either question seriously enough. Like their patristic, medieval and Reformation forebears, theologians keep assuming without question that Scripture, the "inspired word of God," is the pre-eminent source of theological data and the final arbiter of theological positions. But we may witness a trend even among respectable theologians to treat the Bible like any other human sacred book. The only unique thing about our scriptures is that they focus on Jesus Christ, who is special to us. But as books they are just books. Will all those who are really convinced by the arguments defending the selection and closing of the canon please raise their hands?

Two, Three Ancillae

The nub of the difficulty is the gradual dilution of the notion of inspiration. Theologians must finally reach some kind of honesty-point and admit that their present understanding of "inspiration" has virtually emptied the word of all meaning. A frank acceptance of this situation must go hand in hand with a rethinking of what Christianity is and means as one of the religions of mankind (and of what religion itself means in the history of man). One should not infer from this that the Scriptures are worthless or that God's voice cannot be heard there. But the theologian will have to begin to see the relation of his belief and his theological thought to them in an entirely new light. Theology's most far-reaching revisions may lie in this area.

Philosophy will survive as one among many theological tools. I am definitely not an anti-metaphysician, and I consent neither to the Barthian rejection of philosophy nor to the substitution by many recent thinkers of history of biblical theology for philosophy. But it seems clear that other sciences are going to challenge and overturn philosophy's claim to be the *sole* ancilla of theology. (We may leave aside the question whether philosophy is still in some sense the ultimate explanatory science of the other sciences.) When theology moves to its borderlines it will find that philosophy covers only one sector on that border.

Up to now the Catholic seminarian has always studied philosophy (scholastic) before embarking on theology. Increasingly there will be a tendency to accept or require mastery of other disciplines in place of philosophy. Thus a young sociology major beginning theological training—and this, by the way, in the theology department of a secular university—would continue his sociology, with a view to bringing it into useful relation (or fruitful clash) with his theology. There are, of course, some fields whose relevance to theology is hard to see at this time. The social, political and life sciences are obviously more readily usable than the physical—though one of my theologian-friends never tires of reading about *matter,* and the crypto-theologian John Updike wrote a very friendly verse about it. The arts—together with the branches of art criticism—are also fair theological game. We are already aware of the theological interest in literature, yet "literature and theology" is only a small part of the much vaster field of theology and culture. What has been accomplished in the theory, practice and methodology of theological criticism may prove useful (even if it is not too impressive right now) for further attempts at theological interpretations of other human antics and mud pies: film, sport, statecraft, exploration, theologizing. . . .

The problem that will harass any interdisciplinary theological field is this: when theology moves to its circumference, what happens to its center? What prevents the total reduction of theology to something else (e.g., anthropology)? If, in the end, theology is nothing but a slant or an outlook taken on some other science, what will that outlook itself consist in, and what will it be based on? Theologians of my generation can take theological sightings on alien vistas precisely because we already have a lasting impression of traditional theology. But if future theologians are trained from the start in an interdisciplinary or secularized theology, where will the theological focus come from? Future theologians, it seems to me, will still have to master the tradition before they can peck at the borders—otherwise theology vanishes into nothing.

Perhaps a word on theological education will help. The future seminarian will have less and less inclination to accept *personally* the world-view of the ancient Hebrew, the early Christian, the medieval Catholic, or the Reformation Protestant. He will balk at a packaged theology presented as "the truth" or the "explication of his faith." The tradition must instead be put before him more diffidently as the *history* of the tradition—as something he would do well to know about and understand from the inside, and in which he will find *some things* which could be incorporated into his own theological position. Dogma will thus tend to become *history of dogma,* and history of dogma will be history of *ideas.* The theologian must have at least this much in order to have a place to stand; but he will not be eager to accept more.

The seminarian does not need to be immersed endlessly in all the details of all doctrines and controversies in all the branches of theology. On the one hand,

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he should have extremely systematic courses in which the classic problems of nature and grace, freedom, Christology, the Eucharist, the church, etc., are presented in a condensed, streamlined, typological way so that they can be grasped clearly once and for all, in their main lines, as hypothetical alternatives to questions that have arisen and may arise again in different form. On the other hand, our young man (woman) needs to cut his teeth on key texts and documents which have influenced Christian thought: Ignatius' letters, Origen's *De principiis,* half a dozen of Augustine's works, *Cur deus homo,* Luther on free will, and so forth. These two complementary sides of the theologian's early training will, hopefully, give him both a grasp of the inner structure of the noetic side of traditional theology, together with an historical sensitivity to the verbal and cultural context of central theological statement. The tradition will thus continue to influence his faith while leaving it somewhat disengaged from that tradition as content to be believed.

[VIII]

While you are thinking about theology and its future, and about all this ethics and world politics, about inspiration and systems, about the new hermeneutic or latest encyclical, remember: scientists estimate that there are probably 100 trillion civilizations in the known universe.

[IX]

The Dutch philologist J. H. Waszink tells us in the introduction to his excellent presentation of Tertullian's *Against Hermogenes* that the *theological* interpretation of the work will have to be supplied by someone else. That was 13 years ago, and the world is still waiting. Peruse the *Journal of Theological Studies* and see how few trained patrologists have tried to use their specialized learning to illumine man's religious predicament—or even to help us understand the Fathers' peculiar contribution. If patristic scholars cannot, or will not, go beyond philology and the establishment of texts, patrology is dead. It was the dreariness of philology that first put Nietzsche in revolt. The theologian of the future will have to step over the patrologists of the present, and reformulate the patristic *Sache* in terms that mean something for the religious search.

Patrology can be the scene of lively developments. Now, patrology has nothing unique to offer as a theological source: Athanasius and Chrysostom have no more normative weight than Melanchthon, Newman, Teilhard or Bultmann. But once the necessary debunking has run its course, there will still remain a good use for the Fathers. For it would be very helpful if we could know, in depth, why early Christian belief and speculation took one form rather than another, and how the patterns of thought are to be understood in the light of our present knowledge of religious psychology, sociology, and especially cultural anthropology and comparative religion. Patrology, in short, must become interdisciplinary, as well as thoroughly demythologized, if it is not to become a mere scholarly pastime. We desperately need patristic research and syntheses by people with the interests and training of men like Eliade, Levi-Strauss, Voegelin, Ricoeur, Marcuse, Norman O. Brown, Joseph Campbell, Hans Jonas and Marshall McLuhan. We need interpretations and critiques in which the questions about belief addressed to the Fathers are as potent as the ones we ask ourselves today. We could even profit by another biased, bullheaded, wry, readable report like Harnack's.

[X]

Theologians of the year 2000 will not be aware of the rude shock to be administered the following year by the discovery on the moon of a black monolith four million years old.

[XI]

Ecumenism will spread and deepen, softening and refreshing (if not always uniting) all but the fundamentalists. At the moment ecumenical parishes and community projects are ripe, and wait only upon the drowsiness of bishops. At the theological level, Catholics will enter more deeply into the religious problems raised by Kant and historicism with which Protestants have been grappling for two hundred years, while Protestants may have to take the 13th century more seriously than Barth or Tillich did.

But there is a strategic flaw in theological ecumenism. It aims at rapprochement between doctrinal viewpoints and formulas hundreds of years old which very few left-wing theologians can get excited about. It does about as much good to marry Luther and Aquinas as it does for a Mormon to pair off Joan of Arc with Eugene III. Ecumenism risks getting hopelessly tangled in rear-guard action while the real fighting is miles away. In itself Reformation research is as valid as any other historical study; but relative to the theological crisis of the present and future it is something of a luxury. Moon people are not going to be reading the *Augsburg Confession.*

[XII]

Advances in communications and media will have their effect on theology. Computerized translation and printing may eventually make the learning of modern languages unnecessary for the ordinary student and many professionals. The researcher will learn instead the mysteries of computer programming, information

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theory, statistics and probability, and rapid reading. Team research and think-tanking will complement the isolated plodding and solitary creativity that has marked most theological activity up to now. Conventions will be partially replaced by telephone and eventually TV. More fruitful informal exchanges at conventions could be arranged by something like a "dating service" with computerized opinion profiles from a national pool.

In a world where there are (for example) 35,000 scientific periodicals alone, accompanied by 300 abstracts journals as well as abstracts of abstracts, over-writing must be deemed a scholarly sin. We urgently need theological publications featuring ideas and findings that are flashed on quickly and cut like the images on a TV commercial. *Theological Studies* or *Theology Today* for instance might launch a fifteen- or twenty-page section given over to two-page presentations (originals, not abstracts). And there are some kinds of theology which might be communicated more effectively through TV and film than through books—one would have thought that Fellini and Bergman had already demonstrated this.

80,000 American college students are enrolled in film courses. The increase may be tenfold in ten years. Will one of them be a seminarian?

[XIII]

Church authority will not change its self-understanding very drastically in the next thirty years. The thoughts that follow are therefore strictly utopian.

Rahner is right in saying (*NCR*) that when a thinker dissents even theoretically from the basic presuppositions and consented principles of a society, the society has the right to declare that the thinker is intellectually estranged from it (heretical). But radical theology is part of ecclesial society and its very dissent means that any supposed consent is not universal. Radical theology, moreover, claims to have as much right as any other theological outlook to decide what the presuppositions and principles of Christianity are. "True theology" does not exist objectively somewhere over against the theologizings of theologians; and radical theologians are theologians with a right to theologize. Our understanding of the faith, then, cannot be settled by an appeal to brute authority. For it is precisely the task of the theologian to explain what the faith means; any such explanation is nothing but a theologization. To formulate and impose a creed is to enter upon a theological process. And the proper place for the theological process is the theological forum—a hectic place where consensus is only a dream and there is no such thing as a "correct ideology." If in the early church the bishops made this process into a *church-political* one, they were partly justified by the fact that most bishops in those days were either conversant with theology or were theologians themselves. The difference between that early situation and today's may be judged by totaling the number of "theologians" among the 250 American bishops at Vatican II. The whole idea of arriving at "true doctrine" by political pressures and majority votes shows that something is wrong with the venerable tradition of using church councils to promulgate articles of faith. Once this is recognized there can be no question of seeking authoritative solutions to matters of theological understanding. Christian belief can never be formulated in a final way. Alternative explanations of the faith are speculative hypotheses having degrees of plausibility (not in relation to any absolute, but in relation to traditions and historical phenomena to which the hypotheses appeal, or to coherence with other speculative hypotheses), as well as degrees of helpfulness in leading to a fruitful and joyous practice of the Christian way of life.

The proper role of episcopal authority is pastoral—that is to say, socio-political—leadership. It concerns the church's presence in the world and the handling of the people of God as a collective body. It is a matter of church order, the disposition and use of church resources and personnel, and tactics for making the gospel come alive in the world. It has little to do with theology as such. In the pastoral sphere, the bishops have the right and duty, which few of them effectively exercise, of leading (or prodding) their local churches in the conflict with social and political evils. Alas, courageous, imaginative episcopal initiative is missing just where it is called for. The tragic anti-response of the hierarchy to James Forman shows just what I mean. (I suppose if Forman had "asked nicely" for a "donation," instead of "demanding" money as "reparation"—bad words!—we would have given forthwith?)

Infallibility, both papal and collegial, will finally be dismissed by theologians even of the center. Believers will have a harder time letting go, except on the left where they are already getting on quite well without it. It will, however, stay on the books eternally along with the condemnation of usury and the crossbow.

[XIV]

Future ecumenical councils will be more important in the life of the church than in the history of dogma. The next council could be very unfortunate if Roman Catholic bishops are the only deliberating members. As Hans Küng has shown, there is little reason why bishops should be the sole voices debating and deciding matters that concern the common belief or joint action of the church. If indeed these matters are to be decided by councils, then there should be voting representatives from all strata of the church: laymen, sisters, theologians. Above all, the Protestant and Orthodox churches should enjoy full participation—otherwise the council should be boycotted and declared illegitimate. And we should stop calling it "Vatican III" (or IV, Dan Herr). What is wrong with Geneva I or Toronto I?

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[XV]

The most radical changes in the history of ideas occur when unnoticed presuppositions are dragged out into the open and challenged. I have noticed mine just in time, but I am so thoroughly wed to it that I do not know how to predict its revision. My assumption all along is that theology is a *questioning* process. If a generation arises which no longer asks questions then just tear this up. Whether such a generation is coming is a question for McLuhan to decide.

JOHN MACQUARRIE

SELF-TRANSCENDING MAN

If we assume that no global disaster befalls the human race and that present trends continue, then I believe that, in its main outlines, Father Anselm's picture of the future of theology may well turn out to have been a perceptive one. It is also a hopeful one, for he visualizes that theological studies will continue to be vigorously and imaginatively, pursued and he may be too optimistic about this.

Many of the things which he foresees are already happening and are well established. That theology, in a secular age, must take the anthropological route, is something I have long argued myself. As far as this point is concerned, Karl Rahner seems to be correct in saying that "Bultmann has really won the day over Barth." Again, the acknowledgement that the other religions have their own integrity and are vehicles of grace and revelation will surely come to be widely accepted. It does not follow, however, that the Bible will be "like any other human sacred book," if this is meant to imply some kind of syncretistic canon in which we read indiscriminately from the literature of all religions. I would need a lifetime not only of study but of existential involvement before the scriptures of Buddhism, let us say, could speak to me as the Bible does. Again, a theology of culture, relating itself to secular disciplines on its borders, will be likely to prevail over the kerygmatic style—and here we may say that Tillich has won the day over Barth. (Wait! I am going to give Barth his turn.)

But although I would agree with Father Anselm on these broad questions, I would like to take issue on some points. I do not find him making clear the difference between the kind of anthropology that will emerge from the theological investigation and the kind that comes from the behavioral and human sciences. The great task of the theologian, as it seems to me, will be to protect and enhance the mystery and transcendence of man—the deepest humanity of man. Sociology, psychology and similar sciences, as they have developed in America, have had as their presupposition a naturalistic view of man. He has been regarded as an empirical phenomenon and therefore as something manipulable. Theological anthropology will have its distinctiveness in exploring the truly human.

I think this is a specially auspicious moment to begin this task, for some psychologists and sociologists are already in revolt against the merely empirical understanding of man, while the theme of the self-transcending in man has emerged rather strongly in the Christian dialogue with Marxism and other forms of unbelief. Perhaps indeed it is along such lines that the contemporary theologian can best help to prevent that grim catastrophe which Father Anselm mentions in his opening paragraph. For if man is merely (as Desmond Morris has suggested) an unusual type of higher ape, distinguished by his lack of fur, his superior cunning, his vicious aggressiveness and his insatiable lustfulness, then the universe probably deserves to be rid of him. Man makes himself by his images of himself, and he treats himself and his fellows in accordance with them. The Christian theologian's task is to point beyond every reductive image to "the stature of the fullness of Christ," who unveils the mysterious potentialities of the *humanum*. But the theologian also acknowledges that men recognize the Christ as Christ because these same potentialities are already stirring.

Incidentally, it will be along these lines also that theology will come to the theme of the ultimate mystery, the One we name God.

I am glad that Father Anselm sees the future of theology as pluralistic, but I am not sure how far he really allows for this in his demand that theology must have political relevance. Political theology, as Metz has said, is a needed corrective to the individualism of the past, and no one would wish to deny this. But it is by no means the whole of theology, and it is a mistake to suppose that all theology must have an obvious and immediate relevance to the questions of the day. No one can tell in advance what is going to be relevant and what frivolous. And here I introduce my defense of Barth. His theology had none of the qualities that Father Anselm and I have been advocating. He tried to exclude cultural influences, he was negative to other religions, he made God rather than man the center of attention. But everyone knows what happened when Hitler came to power. The liberal theologies that had tried so hard to speak the language of the times and respond to the culture simply faded out, and Barth's esoteric kerygma turned out to be the one *political* theology that was able to stand up to the Nazis. If we are again threatened by totalitarianism (and who can say, "It can't happen to us"?) it may turn out to be some supposedly "irrelevant" or even "frivolous" theology that will have the word needed at that time. I say this not so much to commend Barthianism as to suggest that we keep an open mind about the many types of theology that will continue to proliferate and don't fall into the mistake of supposing that there will ever be *one* way of doing it.

If theology's future is half as interesting as Father Anselm suggests, I shall be delighted!

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The U.S. is the major geographical center for non-theological dimensions of religious scholarship. There is no reason to believe this strength will diminish by the year 2000.

THE RELIGIOUS CULTURES, HIGH AND LOW

A GENERAL COMMENTARY BY DONALD CUTLER

Critics of the churches, and their alternative prophecies for the next thirty years, excite the kind of sympathy one regularly feels for television critics and their writings. Television has bright moments, an occasional triumph, a few substantial figures; but also an enormous followership among the least demanding people, an economic and psychological base so powerful that questions of style are always luxuries that can be dispensed with without alienating the core audience, and a pervasive influence which defies or ignores criticism and drives the critic to the consolation of trying to persuade either his fellow critics or his claque of readers who seldom watch the screen.

One wishes the critic could write without first spending all those passive, receptive hours huddled before the bank of black-and-white and color sets. Doesn't he know that television is something to get hooked on, not to study—in exactly the same sense that seminary professors confessed to us that Christian faith is finally something "to be caught, not taught?" The virtue of television critics is that they make it unnecessary for us to watch most of the programs. Can the best critics of the churches make it unnecessary to go to church?

The gentle pathos of the subject of ecclesiastical forecasting is attributable partly to the condition of the contemporary churches as a medium. They make a bad picture. Allow for the excitement of mini-inquisitions, the surprises of a Council, a few impressive figures, and one office with a claim to grandeur, the papacy. Collectively these excitements cannot compensate for the blindness of the hooked membership, the weight of the organizational structures, the zealous cultivation of sacral mediocrity in all the churches.

To employ a metaphor from folk psychology, there is a grim "stubbornness" in the existence of the American Christian churches, both Catholic and Protestant. That trait is not expressed directly in the essays by Atkins, Gibson, Neuhaus, McBrien, Donovan, Milhaven and Baum; it is to be read instead through the calmness, even the blandness, of their essays and in the rhetorical failure of the essays' dystopian moments. How different is an imaginative projection forward to 2000 from a hasty recollection of 1940? In detail the changes in group religious life since 1940 are fascinating, in total effect they have been substantial. But even in 1940 we had media to inflate the popular response to interesting ecclesiastical developments, and I cannot at the moment think of any single person or event or development that

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looms larger in 1969 than it did during its time of popular interest sometime in the past three decades. We can look back at 1940 with a degree of casualness and familiarity; granting the possibility of a moderate escalation in the pace of cultural change in the remainder of this millennium, we can have a fantasy of 2000 without blinking. If that is so, then I can pursue some reflections, evoked by these essays, which have little to do with whose prophecies please me most.

How has it happened, I would like to know, that we have come to expect discussions of "the church" which imply—sometimes subtly, sometimes transparently—that the writers are not writing to us?

Philip Rieff said recently that the churches were a hundred years ago the pivotal institution in American society, and that he would now designate the university as inhabiting the same strategic position the churches once controlled. For one part of the society, however, the churches have continued to be pivotal; they still are. In the past century, I think, we have experienced the emergence of two distinguishable, parallel high cultures in the United States. We are more familiar with the supposedly more "secular" of the two high cultures: the one articulate first in philosophy, then in literary criticism, and more recently in political thought and revisionist views of Western, especially American, history. People whose lives and thoughts have been informed by this culture lodged in the university and in publishing and the arts, have been indifferent to "religion," hostile to the churches, and commonly confused about the possibility that "religion" and "church" might not be synonymous terms.

The second high culture has consisted of the way of life of the intelligentsia of the churches, overlapping but not identical to the political leadership of the churches. Remarkable sensibilities are not rare in this culture. The culture has generated a stream of scholarly and critical work, some of it of the most elegant dimension. The religious high culture has been divided by traditional and denominational boundaries into small, self-contained sectors, so that the religious high culture has not had the visibility of its secular companion which appears to, and often presumes to, cast its umbrella over the entire society. But what the religious culture has lacked in diffuse popular recognition it has gained in internal solidarity. The rites of initiation to the religious high culture are demanding and the quarrels among the brethren can manifest as much bitchiness as the letters to the editor columns of the *New York Review of Books*.

There has been a mutually advantageous exchange between the brotherhood of the high religious culture and the 'societies' of the churches. The churches have paid their respects and the bills; the brotherhood has fulfilled its obligation to infuse the chronically indifferent or hostile ordinary life of the churches with ideas and style. It hasn't really mattered that lots of line bishops resist many specific offerings from the brotherhood of the high culture. The existence of the high culture is in many ways a security blanket also for those who do not depend upon the culture itself for direct nourishment. So long as the requirements of the high culture were

indirect, the brotherhood could and did speak largely to itself and with its own rhetoric. The essays in this collection come from the brotherhood. I confess that I felt I was not being addressed by several of them.

My response ventures into impoliteness and there would be good reason not to air it except that it touches on one of the factors with respect to which there have been interesting developments since 1940, and there promises to be more before 2000. More than enough disruption has occurred in the structures of the churches to disrupt also the relations between the churches and the religious high culture. The solidarity of the seminaries-clergy-cadre-of-articulate-laymen is breaking down. The shock to the religious high culture is very similar to the shock expressed by many liberal intellectuals in the secular high culture as they experience the university's breaking open a little under the pressures of radical action. David Riesman needs his university as urgently as a theologian needs his church.

Boundaries between the parallel high cultures are not as clear as they were in 1940. As the blurring occurs one is able to see what before, ironically, was more obscure, namely, that the entire society is teeming with religious elements—myths, ideas, roles, groups. There is a new opening for religious expression and symbolization in the old "secular" high culture, an opportunity for the old religious brotherhood to appeal to the kind of radically dispersed and heterogeneous fellowship that the bearers of secular culture have learned to approach through the bonds of media which evoke very little felt social solidarity. As an editor I've watched a few writers groomed in the high religious culture and its special closed circuit media try to make that amazingly intricate transition by which attention and self-consciousness are

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turned to the wider society. (It *is* a temptation to circumvent the issue by going pop.) The heroes of the next thirty years will be those who explore that opening most successfully. I understand Gregory Baum to have a more articulate and rationalized understanding of this development than I can provide here. Consider the following statement:

> Ecclesiology brings out the manner in which salvation comes to men everywhere and hence has to do with human life in community. Church, then, in this new perspective, is the whole of mankind inasmuch as it is touched by divine grace.

I do think there is an implicit temptation here to consummate the whole development immediately by saying the same old thing to an ostensibly larger congregation: the whole world.

> What, then, might be the ecumenical situation of this kind of church in the year 2000 (if, in fact, we can speak of a meaningful marriage between the theological rhetoric of the preceding paragraphs and the stubbornly empirical reality of the contemporary church)?—McBrien

No other aspect of these essays is as troubling to me as the amount of conceptual space one finds between the theological rhetoric and the empirical statements. There is seldom a courtship, and never a marriage. On the one hand there are many theological passages which seen at first glance to be to some degree also empirical statements. For example:

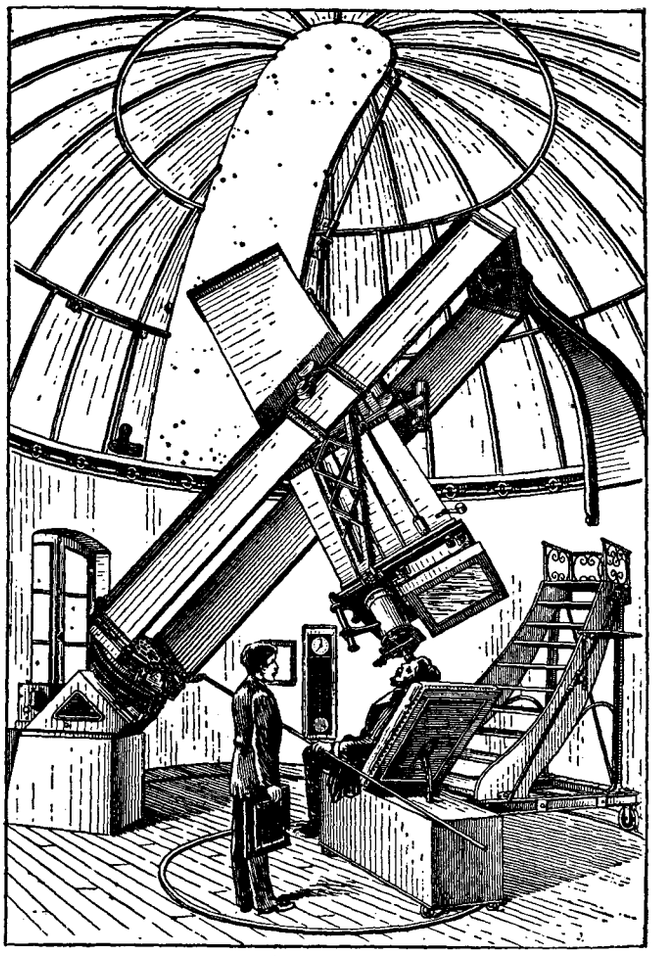
> And that is why the ecumenical situation of the church in the year 2000 will have to be measured not by the extent to which the church has become the world, but rather by the extent to which the church has facilitated and sustained the dialogue among men about the coming of the Kingdom of God, about the realization of justice, compassion, truthfulness, freedom, tolerance and peace.

Further reflection in context suggests that the symbols of quantification in such a passage ("measured," "extent") are not in the strictest sense empirical references, nor do the symbols of action ("facilitate" and "sustain") necessarily imply actual events. Because quasi-empirical terms are sprinkled generously into these passages concerned with a satisfactory doctrine of the church I thought that in some of these essays a doctrine of the church had become an end in itself.

On the other hand the obvious empirical statements (for example, in John Donovan's careful projections of the condition of the priesthood in 2000) tend to begin and end in Glock and Greeleyland, in survey researchville; such statements are, I believe, the most difficult kind of statements to bring to a useful or enjoyable marriage with theological statements.

The main consequence of the theological-empirical gap is that one loses a view of the church itself. A doctrine of the church fills in a space where a view of the church itself belongs. Where does one find an illumination of what kind of church "this kind of church" (McBrien) is? What is the difference between "the church" as it is repeatedly referred to in these essays, and the churches? What elements does a body have to have to constitute a church? Through the mediation of what terms can I compare "my" church to the most similar comparable institutions in Eastern Europe, Lebanon, India, Japan?

Do we not yearn at least temporarily for a reversal of the sources from which we ordinarily receive theoretical and empirical writings about churches? From the social sciences it would be pleasant to have a wealth of new theoretical formulations of what a church is, and I think it likely that we shall receive some interesting formulations before 2000. The formulations will not be "doctrinal" but they will include a richer variety of certain elements that one finds in any comprehensive theological doctrine of the church. The discipline of anthropology will be more resourceful than survey research sociology. What we need is not "hard" information about the less interesting aspects of the churches;



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we need a greater variety of perspectives from which to think about churches. On the hard-soft continuum, most of the information in W. Lloyd Warner's *The Family of God* is soft. It is, however, nothing short of liberating to think of the church as an organization of myths as an alternative to thinking of the church as either a set of doctrines or a political structure.

Villager Theology

From the high culture of the churches, then, one would like to see more attention to trying to express to us what it is like to be in and of a church. We are indefensibly ignorant about that. A fine model for the portraiture we lack has just been published, Ronald Blythe's *Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village* (Pantheon). The villagers literally speak for themselves to a reporter who knows music when he hears it. The orchard worker says:

> When we had our son, my wife wouldn't leave the house until she could take him to the chapel and thank God for him. . . . We went down there and we said to the minister, "We want to give thanks for the birth," and the minister said a prayer for our boy before the church, and said his name to them. He didn't make a song about it, it was just a passing word.

Robert Palgrave, bellringer, says:

> The bells tolled for death when I was a boy. It was three times three for a man and three times two for a woman. People would look up and say, "Hullo, a death?" Then the years of the dead person's age would be tolled and if the bell went on speaking, "seventy-one, seventy-two. . ." people would say, "Well, they had a good innings!" But when the bell stopped at eighteen or twenty a hush would come over the fields. People were supposed to pray for the departed soul, and some of them may have done. This practice was continued up until the Second World War, when all the bells of England were silenced. It was never revived. The sexton got a shilling for ringing the deathbell.

Blythe began with the village. His song of the village has a few special stanzas about the religious dimension of the church there, but other religious factors crop up throughout the portrait so that the boundaries of the village are the boundaries of the religious system. The best word on ethics is spoken by the village veterinarian. The details of historical change which has deeply affected the religious culture are presented collectively by the villagers, young and old, professional and workingclass, clerical and lay. It is profoundly refreshing to learn how much they know and understand. It is reassuring to perceive the beauty of their collective expression of the good and bad, and sacred and profane, in Akenfield.

What about Chelsea or Murray Hill in Manhattan or the East Side of Columbus, Ohio or Palo Alto, California? Where are our portraits?

The essays we have presented here have a skewed quality that is difficult to describe but imperative to sense. We did not begin in any village. We began among an undeclared brotherhood, and from that center the inquiry branches out in a helter-skelter pattern—to ethics, to the modern world, to liturgy—to the end that eventually there are no boundaries and no color in the portrait and scarcely a beautiful theme. Recovering the flesh of the churches is the challenge of the next thirty years. It we could speak in detail and with beauty about what the churches are now, our projections for the turn of the millennium would carry more authority.

Writing on Columbus Day, 1969, a great civil-religious holiday in Massachusetts and just another Sunday for professional football in New York, one cannot help wondering what the European-American religious balance of payments will be in 2000. The theological spectrum in these essays has a way of stretching geographically from Berlin to Paris, from Congar to von Balthasar with a strong concentration in the middle of the alphabet: Küng, Metz, Moltmann, Rahner, Schillebeeckx. Will Reinhold Niebuhr be rediscovered? That's a substantial question but not the issue. In 1969 the United States is the major geographical center for the non-theological dimensions of religious scholarship. There is no reason to believe that this American strength will diminish by 2000. Only theology itself seems not to have had its Columbus Day. At least at the level of style, perhaps, American and European theology may diverge in the next three decades. The recent appearance of Mary Bosanquet's fine biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the promise of the forthcoming biography of the same man by Eberhard Bethge remind one, by the power of the exception, that theologians have not been expected to be important public personalities outside the boundaries of the high religious culture. "Theologians" exist more as collections of writings than as personalities. The exceptional case in the 20th century has been Dietrich Bonhoeffer but the exception has been realized only posthumously.

Among the younger theologians, one now senses more collective desire to be personalities. It is difficult to judge what is cause, what is effect. But it isn't difficult to see that younger theologians want to write more autobiographically, more personally with respect to prose style, often more playfully. That terrible smog of graceless sobriety which hangs chronically over theological writing may be dispelled long before the air in the major urban centers of theological scholarship is fit again to breathe.

Can a society which pursues industrial conglomeration ignore the benefits of ecumenism? Both conglomeration and ecumenism are defensive strategies with "positive

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thought" ideologies. The risks and accidents of history are softened with mergers; however much some of the members are inconvenienced by the alliances, the proponents have pushed the strategy as a way of insuring against the collapse of the whole system. From 1940 to 1970 ecumenism has been a marvelous process of softening boundaries previously accepted with an air of unchallengeable historical determinism. Looking across the borders many of us have been overwhelmed by the arbitrariness of our previous separations and by the excitement of new recipes for religious systems that would draw upon ingredients once thought to be distasteful in the same stew.

During the next thirty years we shall be constructing somewhat different kinds of religious communities to support the kind of religious culture we find valuable. "Late adolescents," as we snugly refer to the 20-year-olds of 1970, will probably not admire or support in 2000, when they are 50 years old, the kinds of religious communities still respectably vital in 1969. The churches collectively are one of the very few social institutions in America which exist for the good of the membership itself. Most corporate life has goals and ambitions that lie, as it were, "outside" the corporation. The ecumenical movement revealed how deeply American churches had absorbed the adversary spirit of other American corporations.

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Even the socially and politically liberal wings of the churches can be gently indicted for having ignored the quality of life in the churches (conceived as a small society) in favor of articulating conditions for the good life and the true faith in the whole secular society or the whole secular world. For the moment the liberal spirit is tired and there is consequently a new opening for the religious figure and the religious community grounded in a more conservative spirit.

Social Conscious Evangelism

On the Protestant side, one has to be impressed by the progressive views preached by prominent men at the U.S. Congress on Evangelism in the fall of 1969. This new opening to social constructivism among the evangelical churches is equivalent in opportunity to the opening for the religious high culture in America to merge more interestingly with the old secular high culture. The Evangelicals can be expected to have the proper instincts to balance a strong sense of the church as existing for the good of its constituents, with a new sense of the surrounding society as more redeemable by ordinary social action than by old fashioned missionary preaching. Billy Graham has been pushed discernibly to the left in the past decade; a major indicator of the religious pulse of the next thirty years will be where he and his heirs stand at any given moment.

Anselm Atkins noted accurately that one branch of theology has social reality mainly through the medium of book publishing. Almost all of the high religious culture, whatever its ideological bias, is held together by good old-fashioned linear printing. Discussions of the future of the churches seldom fail to prophesy for this print-oriented culture, nor of course do they fail to do justice to the reality of the churches as groups meeting regularly in architectural centers serviced by reasonably stable bureaucracies.

What does get lost sight of is that enormous invisible "churches" out there held together by radio and television and by itinerant priests and preachers. The high culture has film now; the larger culture has television. On the eve of the decade of the seventies, the Sears chain of retail stores will, where local ordinances permit, experiment with keeping the stores open on Sunday. Ostensibly they are responding to our affluence and our leisure time, although in fact they will make more work for many and intensify that sense we have that life doesn't slow down any more for reflection and restoration unless one deliberately takes oneself into the wilderness. The erosion of special times and special places for sacral events will, one suspects, continue in the next three decades. Then the high culture bonded by books and film, and the large invisible church bonded by radio and television will more and more bear the burden of expressing and being what the church is.

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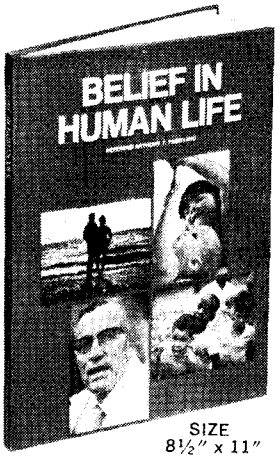

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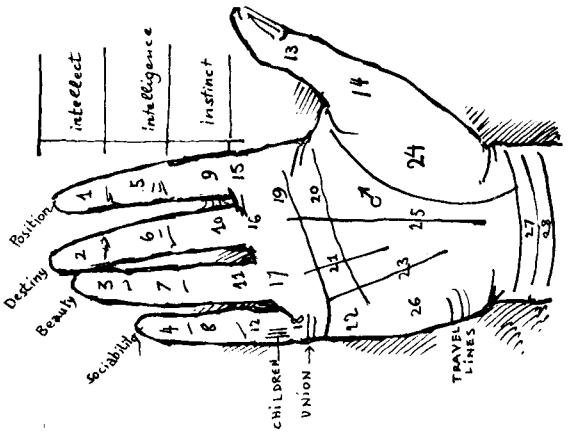
The election of John XXV was stormy. Debates were public and a simultaneous translation system made it possible for the world to follow on television.



ST. PETER'S SQUARE, 1997

FREDERICK FRANCK

Again I stood, one of the tens of thousands in the Piazza San Pietro on a spring day of 1997. Black puffs of smoke had been rising to the blue sky all day. Then, in the dusk at last a white wisp spiraled. A tapestry was thrown over the balustrade of the balcony of St. Peter's and tiny figures appeared. An African bishop in his multi-colored garb stretched out his arms: "Habemus papam!" he cried, and it echoed over the loudspeakers. Then John XXV appeared and the square was filled with deafening jubilation, for the name the new pope had chosen announced his program.

A few weeks later, there still marched in the coronation procession knights in medieval armor, mace bearers and renaissance grandees in lace, but they were outnumbered by the men in space suits, in overalls, in miners' workclothes, by bishops in African robes, Indian ascetics in loincloths and numberless women. They symbolized the trek of the People of God through history, alive in the present and moving into the future. The procession was ended by jubilant crowds, members of the People, celibate monks and nuns and priests with their wives, holding up their children. Behind the Oriental patriarchs walked a small group of old men in scarlet splendor, the last dozens of cardinals ending a thousand-year-old tradition.

I noticed that the Western bishops had once more donned their purple robes and miters for the occasion, while the Africans wore magnificent robes of Kente cloth and the other traditional fabrics of the culture. Each bishop was surrounded by the priests' senate of his diocese. The heads of the ancient religious orders in their historic copes were followed by the monks and nuns; the leaders of the new orders no longer wore distinctive clothing and were undistinguishable from their colleagues.

The election of John XXV—the first papal election to take place in St. Peter's Basilica, arranged for the occasion as a huge aula—had been entrusted to all the bishops of the world. The bishops themselves had been elected by their diocesan or national pastoral councils. The college of cardinals had become depleted during the papacy of John XXIV, elected in 1973 when Paul VI, at age 75, exhausted after 13 years of struggle and conflict, had gone into retirement. The election of John XXV had been a stormy one. The candidates had been nominated by the national and regional episcopal conferences. Debates had been public and a simultaneous translation system had made it possible for the world to follow it on the television screens.

After the upheavals of the '60s and '70s, during which the church had gone through a struggle for its life—or, as some said, through a death and resurrection—there had been a massive defection of priests and laymen. Immense changes had taken place. Paul VI, a tragic figure overcome with sadness and anxiety while watching the "self-demolition" of the church as he had known it, had attempted to delay the demise of the monarchical papacy and the juridical structure of the church. His encyclicals on birth control had failed to convince the masses; his "Ecclesiam Suam" had done nothing to prevent further theological reflection on the meaning of, and the liturgical experimentation with, the forms of the Eucharist. His uncompromising insistence on the preservation of priestly celibacy, instead of putting an end to the controversy, had fanned it, until not only in rebellious Holland, but even in Italy and Spain large numbers of priests were clamoring for the option to marry. The factors which had made traditionally conservative and papalist Holland the spearhead of the reform movement had proven to be not an isolated phenomenon, but forerunners of changes in Catholic mentality, first in the industrialized West, then, gradually, in the periphery and the less-developed regions. Decentralization, advocated by the majority at Vatican II, had led to an acculturation of the churches in Africa and Asia, in which the regional churches had developed forms of their own, almost unrecognizable by traditional criteria.

Cardinal Suenens as early as 1969 had catalogued in historic interviews, which restated the objectives and conclusions of Vatican II, the inadequacies of the conventional curial mind; he had diagnosed the institutional pathology and had projected what could be achieved if the principles of Vatican II were loyally applied. This preparation for the year 2000 had caused a violent struggle behind the closed doors of the Synod of Bishops in that year, the last of the pre-programmed synods in which the Roman Curia, reinforced by new conservative cardinals of its own choosing, had been successfully challenged by a group of presidents of the national episcopal conferences.

It had been the prologue to the election of John XXIV in 1973. Suenens

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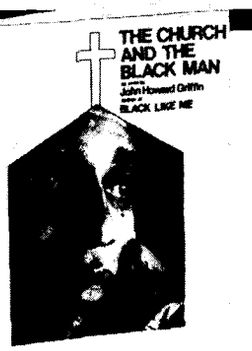

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had dared to propose that the episcopal conferences be consulted publicly and collectively in the preparation of major church documents in order to avoid repetition of the debacles and the loss of authority caused by recent encyclicals. He had strengthened the stance of these conferences *vis à vis* the Curia; he had suggested changes in electoral procedures of bishops and pope, and stressed those principles of collegiality and subsidiarity so clearly desired by the majority of the Fathers of Vatican II.

Subsequently these principles were almost forgotten under the influence of officials who abhorred them and saw them, with justification from their point of view, as great perils to the existing structures.

The resulting crisis had been a manifold one. It was not, as was often stated, a mere crisis of authority. It was also a doctrinal crisis in both the philosophical and theological sense. At the same time it was a spiritual, psychological, sacerdotal, liturgical, linguistic and disciplinary crisis. And it grew into a total crisis of confidence, which had resulted in the unmasking of the anti-evangelical mode of existence of all institutional religions as they presented themselves in the second half of the 20th century, far exceeding the boundaries of the Catholic church.

Post-Vatican II Catholics, deeply concerned with their faith, had obviously gone through a painful discovery of themselves as Christians. Subservience and servility had disappeared in a new awareness of freedom and responsibility. "Childlike obedience," still praised by Paul VI, was seen as belonging to an authoritarian structure, not to one recognizing dialogue. Unity, seen as uniformity, had been replaced by a vision of solidarity in that pluriform experience of the faith and enactment of the liturgy which obviously existed and could no longer be denied. Religious attitudes were increasingly judged by many according to existential, internalized criteria of authenticity rather than by the objective conformity with prescribed duties. Hierarchical pretensions to omniscience and delegated infallibility were increasingly shrugged off.

John XXIV had approved of Suenens and assumed as his momentous objective the restoration of confidence in a contemporary Magisterium. He saw it as his function to occupy St. Peter's chair as leader of the entire community of love, as protector of an inevitable and just diversity, in which the parts would strengthen instead of destroy the whole. His function of Pontifex meant to him the safeguarding of the solidarity of local and regional churches. One of his first deeds was to rehabilitate those theologians, who during the reign of his predecessor had been harassed by a hardly reformed Holy Office. Men like Schillebeeckx, Illich, Oraison, Küng were made members of important commissions.

The pope's sympathetic grasp of the problematic of the ministry and of the changed functions of the priesthood was demonstrated by stimulating the organization of international colloquia between bishops, priests and laymen (in which he sometimes showed up unannounced in civilian clothes). These contacts restored the priests' confidence in their competence as spiritual guides and in their function as focal point of the ritual of transformation, while freeing them for a full participation in the life of the church and of society.

In carefully prepared phases the Holy Father began to find room in the ministry for those priests who had married without abandoning their vocation. He promoted the married diaconate and so the principle of optional celibacy for secular priests had become generally accepted by 1980. In his pastoral concern for people the pope, aided by the Holy Spirit and welcoming the enthusiastic cooperation of younger theologians, had been able to solve the birth control issue gracefully by simply accepting the reality of the situation and placing the function of reproduction in the context of the entire love-relationship between spouses, thus opening at the same time the possibility of the termination of intolerable marriages, as well as the integration of mixed marriages.

The continuous guerrilla attacks which had plagued the reign of Paul VI soon became sporadic and once again the young were drawn to the church as they had been in Roncalli's days. John XXIV spoke to them as a fellow human being, avoiding the majestic "We." He continued Paul VI's innovation of making trips, but his were usually incognito. He enjoyed showing up in a Calcutta slum, at a jamboree of boy scouts in Quebec, at a rock festival in America, at a horse show in Livorno ("I love animals"), and even at a meeting in Uppsala. He hardly insisted on his primacy, but had no problem being the *primus inter pares* in constant open communication with his brother bishops. He saw himself as a center of dialogue and communication, never as an absolute monarch.

President of the Board

Without sacrificing all the archaic folklore of the papacy, he dropped the fiction of being a Head of State, acted simply as president of the Governing Board of the Vatican enclave, the extraterritoriality which he cherished as an island of neutrality, devoted to peace. For he set himself the task of being a peace-maker between nations, classes, races, factions, continuing the efforts for peace that had been the most felicitous aspects of Paul VI's papacy. Quite gradually he changed the role of the nuncios, who no longer accepted the traditional honor of being deans of the diplomatic corps, and replaced them quietly by nationals of the countries concerned, who acted as purely religious liaison personnel with the central administration.

Instead of weekly audiences he initiated monthly hearings in St. Peter's, in which he answered questions on matters of faith with inimitable bonhomie and wisdom, and thus he became a teacher and guru to the world. His concern seemed to be more with the destiny of man than with that of the institutional church. He was less a defender of orthodoxy than the clear representative of Christ on earth, who made the formal authority of the Magisterium yield priority to the authority

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of the Spirit which speaks from the Gospel. Thus he reached out to all movements and encouraged all initiatives, religious and secular, which affirmed values prompting the fullness of human life.

Naturally, relationships with the other Christian churches became ever closer and, during his papacy, intercommunion, which academically remained a subject of debate, became common practice. In the interest of peace, John XXIV invested great sums of the Vatican's resources into research on the causes of human conflict and war. These resources were not theatrically "given to the poor." A large part of the income from investments was used to serve humanitarian ends without regard to creed. Investment policies were no longer secret and not a lira was invested in any undertaking which could contribute to dehumanization. He seemed determined to make the Vatican into the conscience of the world.

Like John XXIII, who had first recognized and accepted the tension between continuity and renewal and taken it out of the atmosphere of illegality and taboo, he was a deceptively simple man who quipped that "the first duty of a pope is to make sense and to communicate with people. If my holy jargon is no longer understood I'll have to translate it!"

To him the specific task of the church was to initiate men into the mystery of human existence as revealed in the Gospel, to transmit to men once more what the church had been able to transmit to countless generations. Its sins notwithstanding, it had been—with its religious and secular derivatives—the only humanizing influence in the bloody history of our culture. The church's task then is to bring the glad tidings of man's dignity and his potentiality for redemption, for liberation from all bondage, the expectation of definitive man, eschatos Adam.

In order to help the church fulfill that task, the pope changed the life style of the Vatican as John XXIII had not succeeded in doing. In the last quarter of the century he had recruited his new administrative officers from all countries, had a new curia superbly trained in their future specialties, but also had attracted the best experts in linguistics, semantics, comparative religion, pastoral anthropology, biology and even ecology, so that the administrative body of the church was equipped to speak not as authority but with authority. He repeated often that the church, centered in an inexpressible Mystery, had to manifest itself in its mission as Word and as Deed.

The denunciation of and struggle against the principal enemies besetting man—overpopulation, wars of destruction, pollution of the environment, wanton depletion of natural resources —he saw as one of its most important duties. The church must defend men against all dehumanization, he said; it is a task directly derived from a Gospel which reveals the mobility of the Spirit as well as the structure of human-divine reality.

The pope had long realized that the church now is a voluntary community which men commit themselves to of their own free will and likewise abandon, and that the old centralized-bureaucratic-juridical style of exercising authority belongs to an epoch in which the church was sociologically dominant. These realizations were clearly expressed in the newly formulated Canon Law, which—while embodying the rules and regulations needed for the proper functioning of the renewed structures, and providing for the changeability of these structures—set criteria of behavior and of faith, criteria no longer attached to penal clauses, analogous to those of secular law.

No New Dogma

In his desire to Christianize and humanize the world he avoided increasing tensions between official church doctrine and the personal convictions of so many faithful. He discouraged all desperate attempts to impose traditional doctrine by sheer repetition or by further detailed dogmatic elaboration. He preferred to listen and to remain courageously silent instead of uttering condemnation or reprimands, trusting that through his love and prayer the central verities of the faith might continue to be credible to, and affirmed by, the faithful. He had opened himself to the ideas of central and peripheral dogma expressed by Rahner, Schillebeeckx and Schoonenberg. In his allocutions John XXIV never hid the vulnerability, the precarious situation of the church, yet he encouraged men to take the risk of faith. He hardly mentioned infallibility, but it was clear to all that through him the Spirit guided the church. He became stern and severe only in denouncing hypocrisy and the cruelty which men inflict upon men and all creatures. His wisdom was compassion.

Instead of trying to preserve a residue of the faith, he concentrated on watering its core, its roots, so that it could produce new growth. When at last he died, people of all faiths, and none, wept in despair.

But it was characteristic of the man who took the name John XXV, that on the hot Spring day of his coronation, he concelebrated a Latin High Mass in the piazza with Melchites, Maronites and other orientals; he broke bread with Protestants, and with radical student groups around kitchen tables in the basement of the American College; he

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In 1969 and '70

THIS FOURTH of the *Commonweal Papers*, which we publish occasionally at no extra cost to our subscribers, is focused on a single theme. That phase of it is not typical of regular issues of the magazine each week. The October 31 issue's imaginativeness, variety and sustained quality are, however, quite characteristic.

Also typical of COMMONWEAL today are the varied interests of such recent contributors as Richard B. Du Boff, Wilfrid Sheed, Harvey Cox, John L. McKenzie, John Updike, Martin Marty, Daniel Berrigan, Maurice Berube, Thomas M. Conrad, Michael Novak, Myron B. Bloy, Jr., Kenneth Rexroth, Isidore Silver, Joseph Blénkinsopp, Jordan Bishop, Saul Maloff, Doris Grumbach, Kathy Mulherin and Bernard Murchland.

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visited the old synagogue in the ghetto, took a nap, then had a long phone call with an African head of state, trying to dissuade him from invading his neighboring country. The next day he flew to Bangkok to participate in a symposium between Christians, Moslems, Hindus, Jews and Buddhists on the subject "The Human Condition."

EDITORIAL

(Continued from page 116)

to bridge the gap between the format and procedures of weekly journalism and the challenge of exploring broad, long-term issues. But "The Church in the Year 2000" is an experiment in a double sense. Where past *Commonweal Papers* depended upon established disciplines—theology and philosophy, for the most part—this one falls into an area ("futurology" some have termed it) where the methods and possibilities are still highly tentative.

Thus the essays here represent widely differing approaches to the study of the future. Arthur Gibson, for example, follows the futurologist's injunction to "think wild." Richard Neuhaus, on the other hand, emphasizes that streak of skepticism which will save futurology from Sunday supplement conjecturing. John D. Donovan employs considerable "hard" data; he is almost the only contributor to do so. (Is this because religion is not amenable to the hard-data approach, or simply because few observers of the religious scene are trained in these techniques?) Certain essays in these *Papers*—Gregory Baum's on ecclesiology, John G. Milhaven's on ethics —describe the future largely in terms of "progressive" developments which are already well under way. In effect they assume a continuity between present and future—and certainly many futurologists assure us that the year 2000 will be more like than unlike 1969. Nonetheless, their approach diverges greatly from Gibson's expectation of a "quantum-leap"; and while Neuhaus rejects quantum leaps in writing for

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"earth-bound non-revolutionaries," he posits a fundamental discontinuity between the situation in the year 2000 and current "progressive" views.

Other differences are worth noting as well. Arthur Gibson's reflections are largely constructed along the axis of technological and scientific breakthroughs. Other contributors look more to sociological shifts: the distribution of age groups in the population, new educational levels, the plausibility of certain symbol · future society, the recurrent necessity of reconstituting social identity after great transitions, etc.

At any rate, the question of style and method looms as large as the specific conclusions reached by our contributors. That is why each essay is followed by a short commentary—to demonstrate our intention to *open* the discussion rather than close or summarize it. And it is significant that the first two commentaries (Neville and Callahan) come down sharply precisely on the question of style; while Donald Cutler's overall commentary again focuses on this point, in fact, comments on the style and methods of virtually *all* current writing about the church.

Despite the divergent approaches of these contributors, are there nonetheless any definite conclusions about "The Church in the Year 2000" which emerge? One thing is apparent. When the American Academy of Arts and Sciences established a Commission on the Year 2000, one of its earliest agendas for discussion listed "art and religion" along with "resources for an inner life." Yet no contributor to *Commonweal Papers: 4* treats the church as a "resource for an inner life." The emphasis is almost completely in the opposite direction: the church as a "resource" (to adopt the less-than-fortunate language of economists and planners) for the public, collective efforts of mankind.

These essays are likewise nearly unanimous in assuming that current debates about structures and "boundaries" —between Catholic and Protestant, priest and layman, those in authority and those subject to authority, sacred disciplines and secular ones, religious enterprises and human undertakings—are already foreclosed. That this assumption is so widespread, and frequently not even considered controversial, is itself a major *fact* to take into account when speculating on the next three decades of church history.

Finally, what are targets for future discussions of this sort? Much more attention must be given to the quite specific and concrete political and social events which seem likely in the next thirty years: the growth of the gap between rich and poor; changes in structures of work and leisure; the development of subtle techniques of social control and pressures to apply them to previously private realms of human life; the very "invention" of futurist planning itself and the type of rationality it implies. The church of the year 2000 may look like that of 1969. If so, looks will be deceiving.

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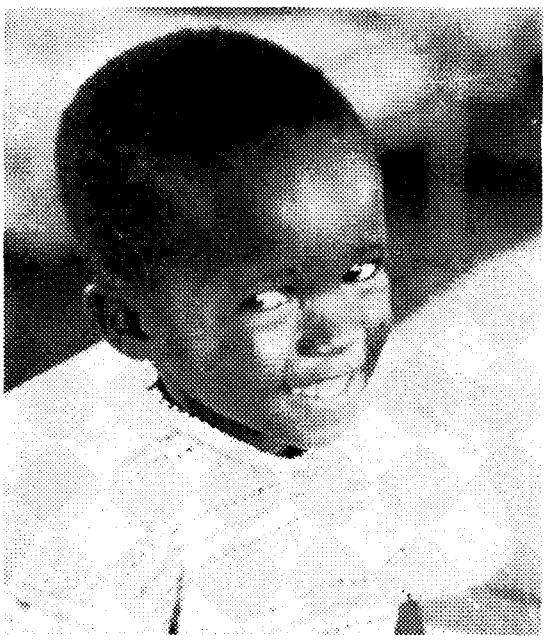

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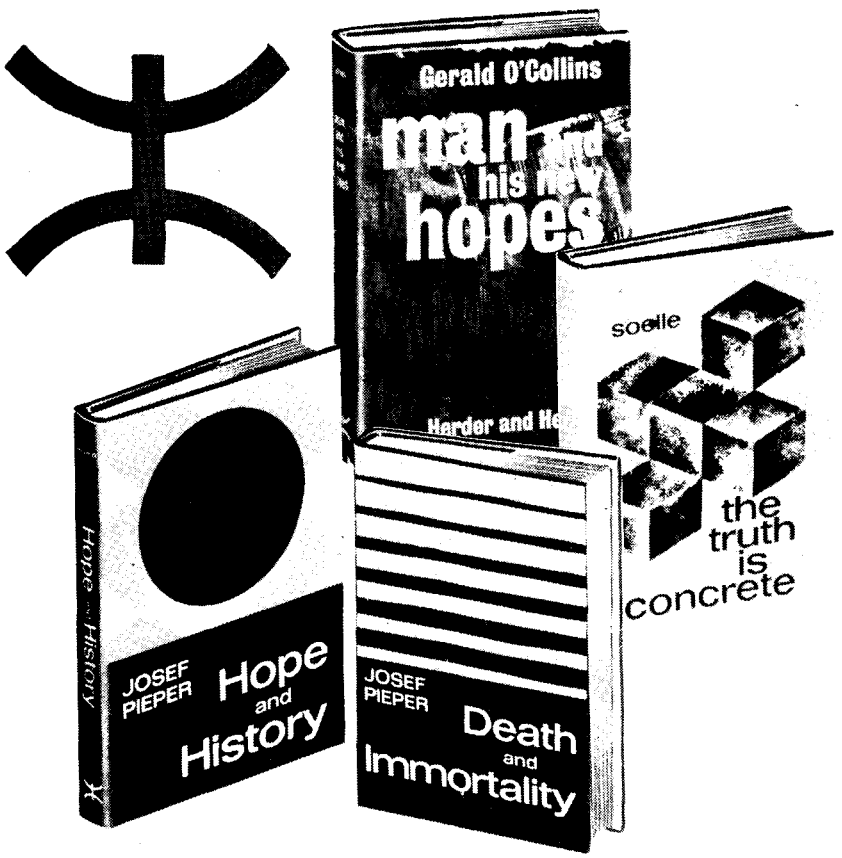
on hope, death and truth



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